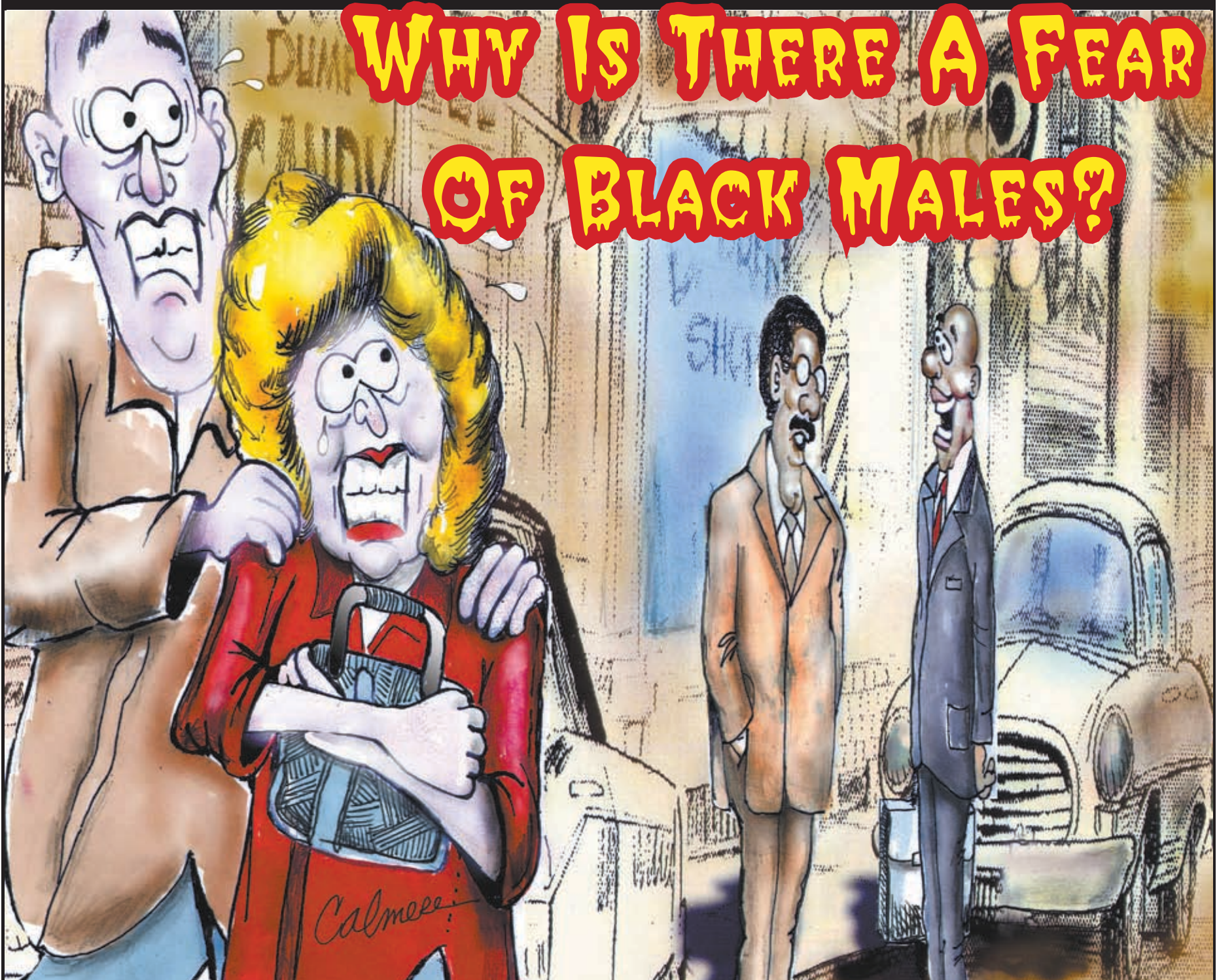


Capital City Courier

News, views & the other side of the story

February 2007



FEATURE Celebrating Black Artists • Alicia Keys Interview • "The Diary of a Tired Black Man" Interview Giving Back No Big Deal For "Reggie" • Local Organization Hopes To Improve Minority Business • A Man On A Mission • Black History Month: The Capital City Courier Would Like To Make It Personal • **IN THE NEWS** African Americans Need To Question Doctors More • **GUEST EDITORIAL** The Eagle Flies on Friday • **INSPIRATION** Chasing The One Who Rewards!
FITNESS An Exercise Program Does Not End After 90 Days • **YOUTH NEWS** Popularity
LIFESTYLES NBA Sports Mom - Linda Shanklin

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From The Editor



On February 10, 2007 Barack Obama will announce his intentions to seek the highest office in the country; that of President. I have watched with amazement over the last two years how he has grown to “rock star status” among the American people. Whether he’s talking to farmers in rural America, veterans of wars or Hollywood’s elite he has this uncanny ability to connect with people. This gift of connecting with people as well as his humbleness in dealing with all the attention he has received should go a long way in helping him in his bid

for the White House. Little did I know that this unknown state senator that I was introduced to by my good friends Keith Chambers and Vince Williams back in 2003 would now be on the verge of running for President. I recall in a meeting with Barack how he said that people were calling him “Osama” or “your mama” when pronouncing his name and that the pundits were saying that with a name like Obama it would be impossible to get elected to the United States Senate. One thing for sure now is that people definitely know how to pronounce his name. Good Luck Barack!!!

As some of you may know there was a break in attempt at the Athlete’s Foot Shoe Store located on Eleventh Street a little over a month ago. This attempt was captured on video tape and ran by Channel 20 news. Additionally, footage was also made available to the Springfield Police department. I felt strongly that the individual that had damaged the window at the store by throwing a brick through it and taking merchandise (9 or 10 caps) should be brought to justice. I felt this way not because the store is co-owned by Kevin Gamble and me, but because this store is located in an area of town where there is a lack of services for the black community. I am pleased to say because of the concentrated efforts of detective Brian Oakes, and members of the Springfield Police department, that this individual has been captured and brought to justice. Hopefully this will send a strong message that we need to create a crime free atmosphere for this area of town so that other entrepreneurs may come forward and establish businesses without the fear of break-ins or robberies.

This month’s edition features the cover story titled “Why are People Fearful of Black Males” written by Kim Gordon as well as stories on Linda Shanklin mother of basketball star Andre Iguodala of the Philadelphia 76ers, Reverend Lee Fields Pastor of Pleasant Grove Baptist Church and a personal interview with recording artist Alicia Keys.

Additionally, I would also like to congratulate and thank Reggie Stewart of Lincoln Computer Consulting for opening up his business on the east side of Springfield and for offering free computer training classes for area residents. Efforts such as Reggie’s should not go unnoticed and should be supported by the “entire” community.

I hope you enjoy this month’s edition.

Michael Pittman



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Local Events, Comments and Announcements



Event Details

Deric Gilliard (Feb. 7): Presentation and book-signing by the author of *Unsung—Living in the Shadows of a Legend—Heroes and Sherones Who Marched with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.*

Talking Truth (Feb. 13) A documentary film by Historymakers, a Chicago-based group dedicated to bringing knowledge to the masses about Black people who have helped make history in America. Reception and panel discussion to follow. No admission charge.

I Love Hip-Hop (Feb. 20) PBS broadcast. Reception and panel discussion to follow. This public viewing is a preview to the African American Studies program's second annual Hip Hop symposium—ON THE MOVE: Movement and Change in Hip-Hop Culture—on April 6-7.



With All Deliberate Speed (Feb. 20) UIS professor Dr. Angela Winand will lead a discussion following the documentary titled: "The Brown Decision and Affirmative Action in Higher Education".

New Philadelphia (Feb. 21) Terry Martin will present the program describing the first biracial community on the Illinois Frontier.

Talk That Talk (Feb. 27) UIS celebrates the African American Oral Tradition. Featuring poets, storytellers, vocalists and OPEN MIC. Refreshments served.

The UIS African American Studies Program Proudly Supports These Black History Month Events

FEBRUARY 2007

1	African Heritage in Classical Music—11 a.m. WUIS 91.9 FM	2	
3		4	
5		6	
7	Deric Gilliard 4 p.m. UIS Brookens Aud	8	
9		10	
11	NAACP Banquet 2 p.m. Crowne Plaza Hotel	12	
13	Talking Truth 7-9 p.m. Brookens Aud	14	
15		16	
17		18	
19		20	
21	Angela Winand Brookens Aud 7-9 p.m. I Love Hip-Hop Brookens Aud 9 p.m.	22	
23	New Philadelphia Noon Illinois State Library	24	
25		26	
27	Talk That Talk 9 p.m. Brookens Aud	28	

Visit the African American Studies website at www.uis.edu/africanamericanstudies



Guest Editorial

by Jim Clingman, www.blackonomics.com

The Eagle Flies On Friday

This familiar line should be the mantra of Black people when it comes to recycling our dollars among ourselves. Why? Well, we always talk about recycling our dollars and spending our money in our neighborhoods, with our own business, to the extent they are available, and considering the fact that the eagle does indeed fly on Friday, we should employ a related economic strategy. Maybe we should use the theme Brother Ashiki Taylor, of Atlanta, Georgia, uses: “Freedom Friday.”

Ironically, the term, “The Eagle Flies on Friday” comes from a familiar song, “Stormy Monday,” which goes on to say, “...and Saturday I go out to play...Sunday I go to church, and I kneel down on my knees and pray: Lord have mercy, have mercy on me.” I say it’s ironic because this is exactly what many Black people do on the weekend.

We get paid, and the eagle starts to fly; and sadly, it flies away rather than around. Our money leaves us so fast that even a real eagle couldn’t keep up with it. Then on Saturday we go out to play; it seems that’s the top priority for us these days – playing or watching someone else play. If it’s not games, it’s parties, all night long. Nothing wrong with a little entertainment every now and then, but let’s not

be lulled to sleep by it.

After the party is over, yes we have to get our “praise on” as some call it. We “go” to church (forgetting of course that we are the church) and start praying and asking God to have mercy on us. We spent all our money and must face a stormy Monday all over gain, trying to regain the money we threw away over the weekend, and we want God to have mercy. He’s probably saying, “Give me a break!”

I can imagine all the groups with which we spend our money saying, “Thank you, Lord, for Black consumers.” Their eagle will fly around their communities many times before leaving, if it ever leaves at all, and they look forward to Mondays because they are far from stormy.

Have you ever considered that our Mondays are stormy because our eagle flies on Friday? If we approach our spending with that in mind our Sundays would be filled with more “Thank you’s” rather than “Have mercies.” I pray we will get this through our heads some day soon and stop this economic death spiral we continue to follow by allowing our eagles to fly away rather than around, making stops at several of our own businesses instead of everyone else’s.

So what will it be, Black folks? How about a Freedom Fri-

day? Do you think we could designate every Friday, just one day per week, as the day we make a concerted conscious effort to buy something from a brother or sister? At the same time, do you think we could cut back on spending our dollars at the businesses owned by others? I know it will be hard; but you only have to do it on Fridays.

Freedom Fridays could prove to be the genesis of an economic revolution for Black people in this country. C’mon, y’all. A little self-discipline is all it takes; it would certainly be well worth it. We cannot have anything of substance without sacrifice. Start your personal Freedom Friday Campaign this week, and let others know what you are doing. Let them know that you are raising your consciousness by taking more control of your dollars and making sure that you spend more with your people.

If we

fail to implement economic strategies of some kind, both personal and collective, we are literally doomed in this country. And as the song goes, Tuesdays will be just as bad, Wednesdays will be worse, and Thursdays will be oh so sad. I suggest Freedom Fridays, but you can call it whatever you want; it’s the action that counts. We can come up with all sorts of cute sayings and slogans, but if we don’t put the appropriate action behind them, we will have accomplished nothing.

We can turn that song into a joyous refrain if our eagles start flying around our neighborhoods, in and out of Black owned businesses, into the pockets of Black employees who work for those businesses, and even making a few stops at Black investment funds.

I travel across this country



continued on page 6



InTheNews

Local and National News

African-Americans Need to Question Doctors More

New Magazine Helps Get the Conversation Started

(BLACK PR WIRE) WASHINGTON

A recent study concludes that African-Americans are less likely than Whites to question their doctors or raise concern about their care, according to an article in the most recent edition of NMA HealthyLiving magazine.

Citing the study conducted by researchers led by Dr. Howard S. Gordon of the Michael E. DeBakey VA Medical Center in Houston, the article stated that reasons for the lack of communication can range from intimidation over complicated medical terminology and confusion surrounding medications to the vulnerability of sitting on an exam table in a gown.

"When we see the doctor, we are at one of our most sensitive times and are usually anxious," Dr. Jane G. Fort, an assistant professor at Meharry Medical College in Nashville stated in the NMA HealthyLiving article. "Medical terms, medicines, prescriptions and directions can be confusing, but we also know the doctor is busy. We know there are other patients waiting and often feel we will take up too much valuable time. We may not feel sure enough to speak up

and ask for explanation."

But that is exactly what they should do. The editors of NMA HealthyLiving magazine contacted Dr. William A. Johnson, medical director for the Luck Care Center in Chicago, who provided the following list of important questions patients, regardless of race, should ask their doctors about prescribed medications:

- **What is the medicine's name and what does it do?**
- **When do I take the medicine?**
- **How long should I take it?**
- **How should I take the medicine?**
- **Are there any foods, drinks or even activities that I should avoid while taking the medication?**
- **Will this medication work safely with other prescription and over-the-counter medicines?**

In the most recent edition of NMA HealthyLiving magazine, Dr.

Johnson details the importance of asking these questions and provides other resources to help patients understand the complicated world of prescription medicine.

The National Medical Association (NMA) publishes NMA HealthyLiving magazine specifically for physicians and their patients. The publication's mission is to spur conversations between patient and doctor, thereby improving the lines of communication. The quarterly magazine, distributed through the waiting rooms of doctors' offices across the country, is designed to help improve the quality of health among African-Americans and other medically underserved populations.

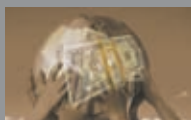
To view the current issue, as well as an archive of past issues, visit www.nmanet.org.

About the National Medical Association

The National Medical Association (NMA) is the nation's largest and oldest national organization representing the interests of more than 30,000 African-American physicians and the patients

they serve. The NMA is a 501(c)(3) professional and scientific organization. NMA is committed to improving the quality of health among minorities and disadvantaged people through its membership, professional development, community health education, advocacy, research and partnerships with federal and private agencies. Throughout its history the National Medical Association has focused primarily on health issues related to African-Americans and medically underserved populations; however, its principles, goals, initiatives and philosophy encompass all ethnic groups.





The Eagle Flies On Friday **continued**

speaking at conferences, doing workshops, and lecturing students and church members; I have been writing this column for more than 12 years now; I am on radio talk shows all over this country; and I have come in contact with thousands of brothers and sisters who say they want to do something about our economic situation. They call talk shows decrying our economic position and the lack of ownership and control of resources where they live and the fact that someone else owns all the stores, the gas stations, the restaurants, the grocery stores, and other vital retail outlets in their neighborhoods.

After all I have said, written, and, more importantly, demon-

strated by personal action and commitment to the principle of economic empowerment for Black people, I truly wonder if it is a lost cause. I wonder if we really want to be free, if we are serious about our consciousness, the same kind of consciousness and nationalistic thinking employed by the very groups about which we complain.

Despite my deep frustration, I will continue to write, speak, initiate and participate in economic strategies that will move our people forward because it is part of my purpose, my mission, my work. I am very concerned about our eagles flying, but I am more concerned about our eagles dying.

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CoverStory

by Kim E. Gordon

Why Is There A Fear Of Black Males?

“At night, I walked to the lakefront whenever the weather permitted...I turned out of Blackstone Avenue and headed west on 57th Street, and there she was, a few yards ahead of me, dressed in business clothes and carrying a briefcase. She looked back at me once, then again, and picked up her pace. She looked back again and started to run. I stopped where I was and looked up at the surrounding windows. What did this look like to people peeking out through their blinds? I was out walking. But what if someone had thought they’d seen something they hadn’t and called the police. I held back the urge to run. Instead, I walked to The Midway, plunged into its darkness, and remained on The Midway until I reached the foot of my street.

“I’d been a fool. I’d been walking the streets grinning good evening at people who were frightened to death of me. I did violence to them by just being. How had I missed this? I kept walking at night, but from then on I paid attention.”

In this excerpt from his 1994 book, “Parallel Time: Growing Up in Black and White,” African American author Brent Staples shares an experience that is all too familiar to Black men. His discovery of the phenomenon that is uniquely

Black and male prompts two responses. His first reaction is an attempt to make himself appear as innocuous and harmless as possible in order not to frighten passersby who perceive Black and male as an instant threat. This experience forces him to become aware of both his Blackness and his maleness as well as the effects his mere existence has on other races. Now, acutely uncomfortable in his own skin and his own personal space, this Dean’s List PhD student with a full fellowship to the University of Chicago decides to turn the tables. Instead of avoiding people, he walks directly toward them, thundering “Good evening!” to their horror-stricken faces as he passes by. Having been made the object of terror, he begins to play the game of demonstrating what terror and groundless fear can be.

Fear, itself, can be triggered by an actual event that imposes itself on us or our personal space, usually violently; or it can be simply a result of anxiety, which is a precognitive feeling that something is amiss even though nothing presents itself as dangerous. In this case, our imaginations begin to work overtime, spinning layer upon layer of “what if?”s.

In a statement that, like the proverbial shot heard around the world, was repeated time

and again by the media, Rev. Jesse Jackson made the comment during a 1993 speech that when he hears footsteps behind him on a dark street, even he, a Black man, is relieved when he turns to discover a White person instead of a young Black male. And while we all have the commonsensical desire not to fall victim to criminality and reckless lawlessness, since when did the Black male become the poster child for crime throughout the world? Even immigrants from countries that have very little contact with Blacks often “inherit” this irrational fear once they arrive at the shores of the “land of the free and the home of the brave.” This leads to Black males being viewed with suspicion and closely watched when they enter places of business that are owned by foreigners...a fact that we often laugh about half-heartedly in public and bitterly complain about in private. So, why all the mistrust and where is everyone getting it?

We can start off by looking at the prisons. Newspapers and magazines, not to mention the spate of books on the subject, are all quick to point out the statistics: Over 40% of the prison inmates in California are Black; nationwide, 51% of incarcerated persons today are Black males. It is also said that 85% of the people on death row are Blacks

or other persons of color. In state after state, the numbers attest to the inequitable delivery of Justice, who may be blind, but is most certainly not colorblind.

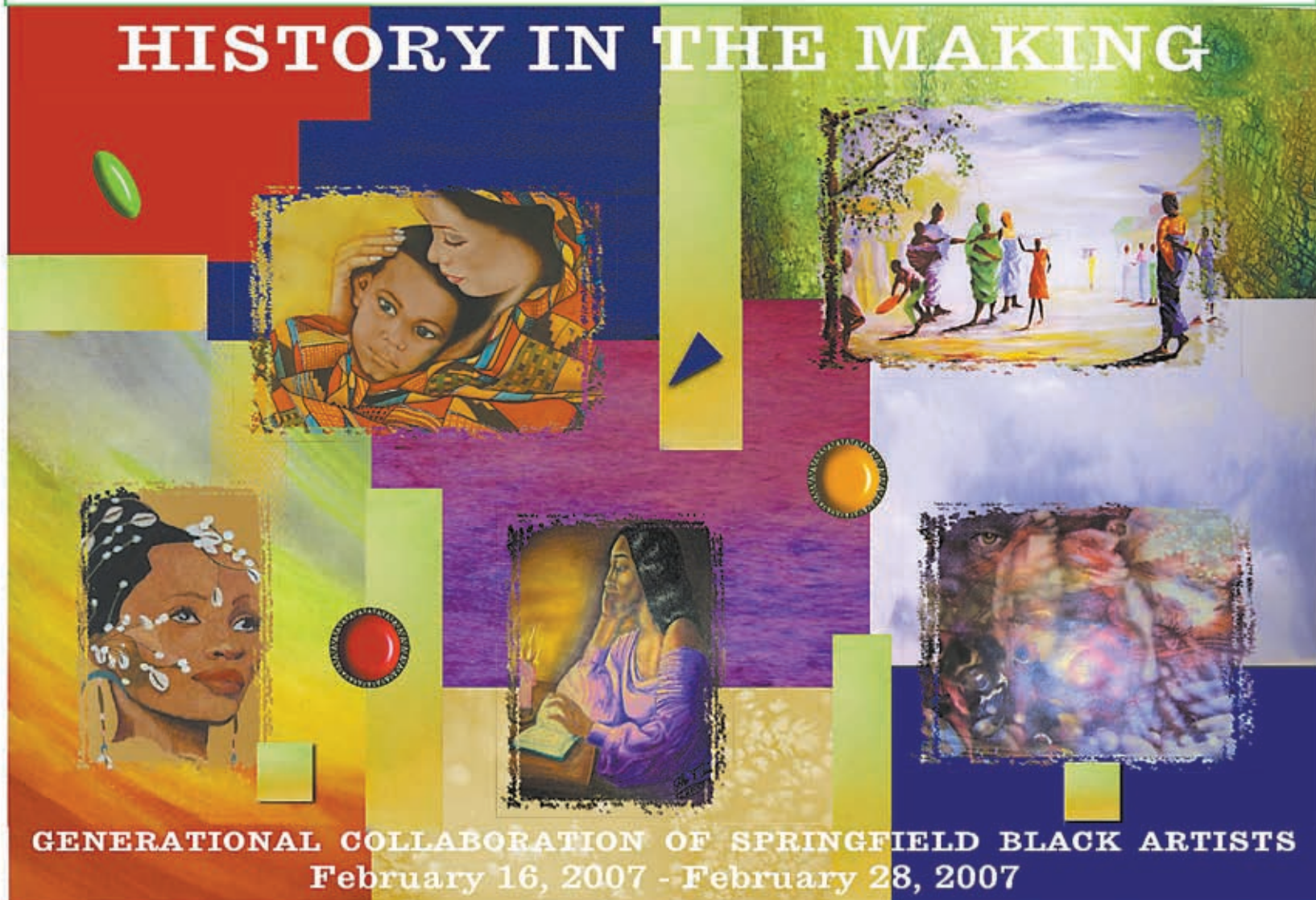
Now the fact is, as the late actor/comedian Richard Pryor once said, “You go into the prisons looking for justice and that’s what you find...just us.” The very presence of such large numbers of Black males would cause you to think Blacks as a whole actually committed more crimes; however this is not the case. There is, in fact, a judicial double-standard that predisposes law enforcement officers, lawyers, and judges to quite literally “throw the book at” Black offenders. Add to that the fact that the system of “plea bargaining” for reduced sentences or no-jail time often works against Blacks instead of for them. And there is the phenomenon of Black political prisoners rotting away in jails which is truly an unreported and invisible feature of American life.

One factor in this tragic situation is the loss of voting rights as a consequence of a felony conviction. (Need I mention that drugs which are predominately used by Blacks, such as crack cocaine and heroin, draw much stiffer penalties and considerably longer sentences that the equally addictive methamphetamines...”crystal

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HISTORY IN THE MAKING

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Why Is There A Fear Of Black Males? continued

meth"...which are used primarily by Whites? And in some states, Black men are convicted of drug charges up to 27 times more often than their White counterparts.) All but four states take away a prisoner's right to vote while incarcerated, thirty-one states prevent inmates from voting while on probation or parole, and thirteen states go so far as to actually ban a person convicted of a felony from voting for life. Talk about "one strike and you're out." In a 1997 report, "Intended and Unintended Consequences: State Racial Disparities in Imprisonment," Marc Mauer estimates 4.2 million Americans are prevented from voting, 1.4 million of whom are Black males.

In the hotly contested Bush/Gore Presidential Election of 2000, when it all came down to the state of Florida, run by George W. Bush's brother Jeb, with the election rules made up and enforced by Florida's Secretary of State Katharine Harris (who was also Co-Chair of the Bush presidential campaign...no conflict of interest there, huh?), it seems a list was distributed in Florida containing the names of 64,000 convicted felons (mostly Black) who were not to be allowed to vote. The problem is the list was about 95% wrong; the voters on that list were not felons...some had never spent so much as a day in jail. Of course, by the time the "64,000 vote mix-up" was straightened out, it was too late. Between those 64,000 lost votes and the tens of thousands of primarily Black votes swallowed up by faulty Florida voting machines that conveniently malfunctioned, it became clear that the right

which our ancestors shed blood to win could be stolen out from under us. Given this fact, it is even more imperative that we keep our Black males out of prison. Black youth must be made to understand that the scales of justice do not tip in their direction, the courts are not likely to be lenient, "plea bargaining" is not likely to be helpful, and one mistake can cost them the precious right to make their voices heard in this country...possibly for life. We can't afford to lose any more of our men to a system that consistently paints the face of crime in the darkest shade possible.

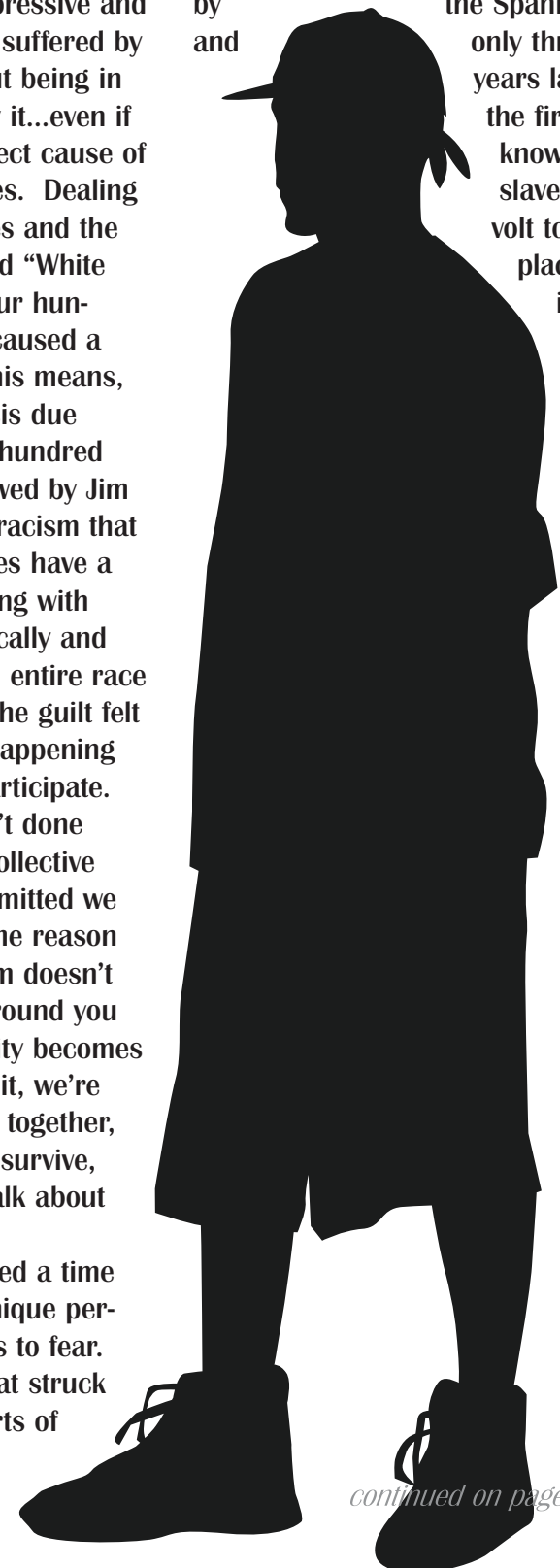
So, if we're not inherently criminal, then what gives? Why are we constantly battling these stereotypes that make our Black males the most endangered species on the planet, with accidents and homicide being the third and fourth most common causes of death? How did Black males become so terrifying that the mere sight of one (or, Heaven forbid, a group of them!) sends other races scurrying to the opposite side of the street and causes them to, as Brent Staples puts it, avoid looking the Black man straight in the eyes, just as one would avoid the eyes of a rabid dog in the hope that he won't attack?

As usual, we have to look at slavery. And, while it might seem tiresome to bring it up again ("Can't you guys just get over that?"), the truth so often ignored is that people cannot possibly live through four hundred years...generation after generation...of such a foul, soul-twisting, degenerative practice without incurring some scars on the psyche. Yes, Blacks have

inherited numerous fears, phobias, and levels of anger from our ancestors' direct experiences in bondage, leading to the formation of a definite type of "coping" neurosis, but I'm talking about Whites now. You see, people cannot live their lives on a daily basis through four hundred years surrounded by the most wretched of oppressive and miserable conditions suffered by human beings without being in some way affected by it...even if they were not the direct cause of the misery, themselves. Dealing with racial stereotypes and the effects of the so-called "White Man's Burden" for four hundred years has also caused a neurotic reaction. This means, Blacks have a neurosis due to the effects of four hundred years of slavery followed by Jim Crow and the covert racism that replaced it, and Whites have a neurosis due to dealing with the attempts to physically and mentally suppress an entire race of people as well as the guilt felt by those who see it happening but do not wish to participate. The reason we haven't done anything about our collective neuroses, or even admitted we have them, is the same reason a person in an asylum doesn't worry. If everyone around you is insane, then insanity becomes the norm. Let's face it, we're locked in this asylum together, and if we're going to survive, we have to learn to talk about it.

Slavery represented a time that encouraged a unique perspective as it pertains to fear. And the only thing that struck more fear in the hearts of slaveowners than a free Black man was

a free Black man with a weapon. Slave revolts receive a passing nod in the history books; Nat Turner is most frequently mentioned, followed by Denmark Vesey. Yet, in 1502, the first Africans were brought to the Americas as slaves by the Portuguese, in 1517 they were first taken to the Caribbean Islands by the Spanish, and only three years later the first known slave revolt took place in



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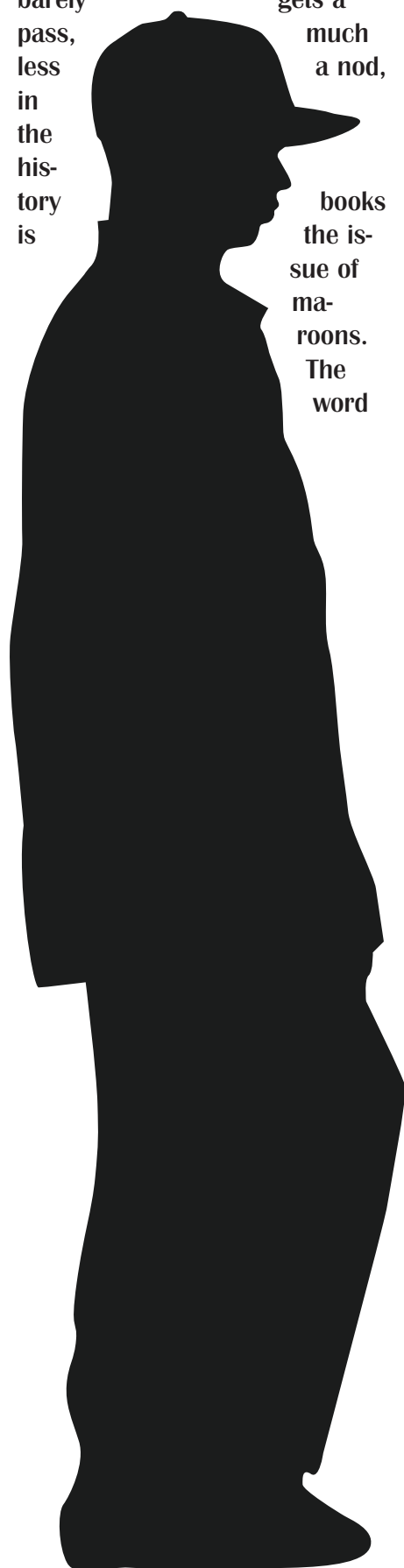


Why Is There A Fear Of Black Males? *continued*

Santo Domingo. Rebellions and uprisings were a lot more common than official reports would lead you to believe.

One aspect of slavery that barely gets a pass, much less a nod, in the history is

books the issue of maroons. The word



comes from the Spanish word, “cimarrón,” meaning “fugitive,” and was originally applied to livestock that ran away. As Blacks began to flee their bonds of enslavement, especially in areas with thick rainforests such as Jamaica and other islands, they banded together to form communities of their own. Some of these maroon communities were as large as whole cities. Palmares in Brazil, for example, contained up to 30,000 inhabitants...the size of East St. Louis, IL. Many maroon communities were self-sustaining towns that grew their own food, made their own clothing, built their own houses, and had a system of government modeled on the great African kingdoms of Songhay, Mali, and others. They often sold or traded their crops, crafts, and other goods with local merchants and farmers, and it has been speculated that this threat to the plantation owners’ economic system was part of the reason maroon communities were constantly under attack. Using the example of Palmares again, this cooperative “island” in a sea of horrifyingly brutal bondage lasted almost one hundred years. However, from its inception, Palmares was subjected to vicious assaults on a regular basis. First the Dutch, then the Portuguese launched heavily armed battles with thousands of men in an attempt to capture, re-enslave, or kill the runaways and to crush the very thing they found most threatening...free Black men. The great city in the Brazilian forest finally fell in 1695, its leader executed, and its lands divided among the captains of the Portuguese army.

Why did this scene repeat itself century after century? From the first Portuguese slave traders who decided in the 1440’s that our ancestors had nothing better to do than to work for them for free for the rest of their lives, to the Ku Klux Klan, organized for the main purpose of stamping out Black freedom wherever it raised its head, a quick pass through history reveals this same pattern and begs this same question: Why couldn’t those in power quit harassing Blacks who wanted nothing more than to live unmolested? For a glimpse into that answer, we have to probe deeper into the mind and approach the study of psychology.

Since this issue deals with the mind and its many perceptions, whether baseless or not, we’ll need to take a closer look at the field of psychology, in particular the practice of psychiatry and how it affects persons of color and especially Black males. While there are many psychologists and some psychiatrists who are truly dedicated to helping people, the area of psychiatry has its roots deeply embedded in racist soil.

The field of modern psychology began with a focus on systems of classification of “species,” including the divisions into different “races” and the accompanying stereotypical personality traits supposedly characteristic of each group. This led, naturally, to descriptions of some races as inherently inferior and some superior based on bias and one-sided thinking. Psychological tests were developed...with the biases built in...and a “normal” set of mental conditions was created so that whatever fell outside

of the “norm” was labeled as “mental illness” and treated accordingly. This brought about some pretty bizarre notions. In 1797, Dr. Benjamin Rush, considered the “father of American psychiatry” (his face is still on the seal of the American Psychiatric Association), claimed in all seriousness that the color of Blacks was caused by a rare, congenital disease called “Negritude.” The only “cure,” he stated, was when the skin turned white. He strongly urged Whites not to intermarry with Blacks as the “disease” might be passed to their children. In 1851, Louisiana physician Samuel A. Cartwright wrote and published an essay for the New Orleans and Surgical Journal entitled, “Report on the diseases and physical peculiarities of the Negro race” in which he claimed to have discovered two diseases to which Blacks were particularly susceptible. These were “Drapetomania,” a mental “disorder” that caused slaves to have an uncontrollable urge to run away from their masters, and “Dysaesthesia Aethiopsis,” or “Rascality,” which was a “disease” of disobedience, laziness, and disrespect, causing the afflicted Blacks to break, waste, or destroy the master’s property, as if out of pure mischief. (Those rascals!)

But as silly as these examples are, they were unfortunately used to argue the slaveowners’ self-serving points. Thus, “Dysaesthesia Aethiopsis” was said to affect free Blacks more than slaves; so to prevent the spread of this dread disease, slaves shouldn’t be freed. Another medical “authority” of the time stated that the “Negro’s

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Why Is There A Fear Of Black Males? **continued**

brain froze in a cold climate, (thereby causing) insanity,” so he felt Blacks should be kept in the South.

Such touching concern for our welfare. (I know I’m experiencing a “brain freeze” right now in realizing that the spell-checker on my PC recognizes “Ku Klux Klan” but not “Palmares” or “Songhay.”)

These ideas, and others like them, were starting to solidify into laws and rules of behavior that were applied to Blacks and Black males in particular by the end of the 1800’s. Things got much worse with the introduction of the so-called “science” of eugenics. Eugenics comes from two Greek words meaning “good birth” and was rooted in the belief that those with “superior” genes have the obligation to pass on their splendid hereditary traits, while those with “inferior” genes should be prevented from reproducing at all. This insidious practice and the groups spawned by its tenets have placed long-reaching tentacles of hatred, racism, and self-loathing into the minds of people of color, especially after it was paired with psychology.

Using standardized tests of human intelligence developed through decades of psychological research, proponents of eugenics began to implement their racist ideas and get laws passed in numerous states that would allow for the involuntary sterilization of people deemed “unfit” or “habitual criminals.” By 1930, twenty-four states had such mandatory sterilization laws on their books, and more than 10,000 people had been sterilized against their will, with California leading the way

by sterilizing 6,737 individuals deemed “mentally unfit.” California used the Stanford-Binet Intelligence Test as the primary psychometric measure of mental deficiency. Standardized tests such as the Stanford-Binet Test have been shown to have a definite racial bias against Blacks. Still, people felt bold enough to suggest all kinds of crazy solutions to the gene pool problem. In the 1970’s, physicist William Schockley, whose claim to fame was that he won a Nobel Peace Prize for being one of the co-inventors of the transistor, thought he knew enough about psychology to propose giving cash payments to Blacks with IQs below 100 who would voluntarily allow themselves to be sterilized. And the battle still rages on: As late as 1994, another book claiming to prove the genetic inferiority of Blacks appeared on the scene to much of the same hoopla and other brouhaha that books of this nature usually generate. “The Bell Curve” was praised by the usual proponents of “good genes/bad genes” and was discussed in intellectual circles throughout the country. In the end, of course, the “data” was flawed as it did not take social, economic, or historical factors into consideration. But that didn’t stop The Pioneer Fund from donating \$3.5 million dollars to the researchers involved in the writing of the book.

The Pioneer Fund was established in 1937 by textile tycoon Wickliffe Draper to “improve the character of the American people” through race betterment principles and to encourage the procreation of “white persons who settled in the original 13 colonies prior to the adoption of

the constitution and/or related stocks.” Also, in 1904, steel magnate Andrew Carnegie established the Carnegie Institution for Experimental Evolution in Washington, DC, the first formal eugenics organization in North America. Through corporations such as these, huge amounts of money have been given to fund “research” to prove theories of superiority and inferiority. And who were the usual test subjects in these research projects?

In the January, 2007 book, “Medical Apartheid: The Dark History of Medical Experimentation on Black Americans from Colonial Times to the Present,” Harriet A. Washington documents case after case of Blacks being used as human guinea pigs throughout history. Black

men in prison have often been the involuntary participants in experiments, from the psychosurgery experiments in New Orleans in the 1950’s in which electrodes were directly implanted into the brain, to the testing of LSD and an experimental LSD-like drug on Black prisoners at the Louisiana State Penitentiary. In 1997, African American and Hispanic boys in New York were given Fenfluramine, half of the dangerous and then-discontinued weight-loss drug, Fen-Phen, in a study to test a “genetic” connection to aggression.

It is in the field of education that racism often gets an early foothold. In 1965, the US Elementary and Secondary Education Act established “special

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Why Is There A Fear Of Black Males? continued

education,” and almost immediately Black children began to be placed into these pigeonholes. According to “Race and Disability: Racial Bias in Arizona Special Education,” in The Goldwater Institute’s Policy Report, No. 178, Mar. 2003, “African American and Hispanic students are three times more likely than White students to be labeled as mentally retarded.” As if this weren’t enough, children in these categories are often given powerful, psychotropic drugs that have dangerous side effects. Ritalin, for example...prescribed for the “disorder” of restlessness and hyperactivity known as Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder, for which there is no valid test, by the way...has effects that are similar to cocaine, according to an article by Brian Vastag in the August, 2001 Journal of the American Medical Association. One of the potential side effects is a suicidal tendency; meanwhile the suicide rate among Black males between the ages of fifteen and nineteen has risen 219% since 1964, as documented by the Citizens Commission on Human Rights. We, as parents, must monitor the drugs that are being pushed at our children in the interest of “keeping them quiet in school.” Become informed; and don’t just ask questions, but demand answers.

We need to know why our teachers are afraid of young Black males in the classroom, and what effect does this fear have on the child’s ability to receive a good education? The stereotype of Black males as violent, drug abusing, gang-banging thugs is reinforced on an almost daily basis. News-

papers carry stories that highlight Black male involvement in crimes at a rate higher than the true incidence. Some media sources intentionally seek out these stories with an eye toward increasing their readership and creating controversy. Television shows portray “life in the ‘hood” with the majority of Black males involved in some type of criminal activity. Movies feed us the same images, holding what the writers and producers perceive as a mirror to our faces. However, most Blacks know these images are not a true representation of life in our skin. Whites don’t always have that advantage, and so what is presented in the movies, on television, and in the newspapers is seen as increasingly true. Suddenly, there are areas of town that leap to the imagination as dangerous, Black, drug and crime-infested; the Black teenager with the baggy pants could be one of them. And to the White teacher, the young Black boy in the classroom speaking ghetto-slang and trying to fit in becomes another potential gang member.

In every category of life, this fear of Black males creeps along behind them like a loathsome shadow, infecting relationships, jobs, their ability to pursue and achieve an education, and even their ability to not land in jail. With no “Get out of Jail Free” card, Black men are aware that they have to exercise extreme caution in everyday situations others take for granted. Faced with the police in even a routine traffic stop, they know not to place their hands out of sight, move too fast, or even talk too fast. Young Black men too often have not learned the basics

I mentioned before, that the justice system is definitely not their friend. And if they make even a small mistake, they go into it thinking their lawyer will fight for them, or someone, from judge, to jury, to bailiff will give them a break. It’s a hard lesson to have to learn, especially from a jail cell, so those of us who are of an older generation need to teach them some of these harsh realities they won’t hear about in school.

In Yi-Fu-Tuan’s “Landscapes of Fear,” he points out that a major task of government in ancient Mexico was to forestall natural disasters by storing away grain. “The emperors took their duties seriously. Motecuhzoma I distributed food and clothing to the entire population; Auitzotl shared out 200,000 loads of maize among the victims of flood. The Chinese emperor, likewise the “father of his people,” mediated between heaven and earth. When harvests were poor, he demonstrated his paternal concern by remitting taxes in the afflicted areas and by opening up government granaries.” (Why do images of Hurricane Katrina spring to mind?) Black men can do this on a smaller scale for their own families and communities, utilizing ancient African principles and philosophies to build their own kingdoms. Remember the spirit of the maroons...working together for a common goal. And reach out to our Black youth, particularly those with no father around. Take time to teach them, motivate them, embrace them, inspire them, and lead them. Our future is literally in their hands. Join a local chapter of Concerned

Black Men. A national organization with twenty-nine chapters in seventeen states, Concerned Black Men provides mentors and programs designed to fill the void of positive Black male role models and make a strong and beneficial impact on the lives of our youth. For more information on this outstanding organization, visit www.cbmnational.org

We also have to begin cleansing our art forms (novels, movies, music, and especially television) of those harmful, negative stereotypes. More positive images must be conceived, reinforced, and supported. Black writers (and especially more Black male writers) need to step forward and create optimistic and progressive aspects of Black living in the pages of their books and stories. Black musicians must bring forth songs that lift us up and show our unique talents to the world. And since no one else will sing our praises, we have to do it ourselves. Today is as good a day as any to start.

Three books of interest that were used as reference and can give more information are: “Even the Rat Was White: A Historical View of Psychology,” by Robert V. Guthrie; “Parallel Time: Growing up in Black and White,” by Brent Staples; and an excerpt from

“Parallel Time” was found in “Brotherman: An Odyssey of Black Men in America – An Anthology,” edited by Herb Boyd and Robert L. Allen.



Celebrating Springfield's BLACK ARTISTS

by Nancy D. Collins



It's ironic that the Editor chose to celebrate Springfield's Black Artists in the month of February, especially with February being viewed as the month of love. Now I understand the connection. I consider it an honor to have been given the privilege of sharing with four of the most talented and gifted individuals in the art world. They have taken their God-given ability, multiplied it and shared it with people all over the world.

Each bringing their own unique perspective to the world unapologetically. Now that's love!

On behalf of Capital City Courier we celebrate Barbara Mason, John Crisp, Jr., Norman Calmese, and Olu Jimi Adeniyi for giving us the gift that keeps on giving through the medium of art.

Barbara Mason



Prayer and meditation is a must before ever putting the paint brush to the canvas. She always wants to

check to see where the relationship is...that is with the Father. Barbara Mason has learned in a very short time what works for her as an artist. She knows what contributes to her success, and it's all spiritual. "No price is too big to pay. I'm a willing vessel". She says each piece of art carries a message, and for those who've had the pleasure of being in the company of her creations, the message is powerful. There's a divine connection. People show up and encounter exactly what they need, many times without interpretation. It's relational. Barbara calls it ministry.

Barbara Mason is a native of Springfield, Illinois and is married to James Mason. They

have a daughter Christian, who's away in college. Barbara and James have developed an awesome husband and wife team. She says she appreciates him for allowing her to work in a non-chaotic environment. He travels with her extensively, accompanying her in her travels nationally.

It was between 1997 and 2000 when she came to know she was an exceptionally gifted artist. She says people started asking to purchase her creations. It was at this time she began going to art shows and learning more about the business.

Barbara's art style is known as photo realism. Photo realism consists of paintings that are true to life. She shares several variations to appeal to a broad audience. From Afro-American themes, to floral pieces, to cars, she explores everything that has a common ground. She creates a little bit of everything for everyone. The universal theme in Barbara's creations is her ability to use bright, captivating colors that lifts the spirit, and cools the

soul. The subject or subjects of her artistic creations seem to always speak to relationships. Her media includes water color and pastels, with water color being her favorite. Recently she's mastered a new form of art, sculpture, which is bringing her much success. Using her gifting to imagine and create clothing, these creations are also powerful pieces that identify with her audience and are considered relational.

Barbara's short time in the art world has not diminished her ability to compete with those who've been around for a long time. She has now earned the status of Master Water Colorist and is recognized locally as well as nationally. She has been a featured artist at the National Black Arts Festival in Atlanta, Georgia, the International Expo in Philadelphia Pennsylvania, and the Dusable Museum of African American History. She has membership in the Sangamon Watercolor Society, Prairie Art Alliance, and the Midwest Watercolor Society. In 2005 Barbara was commissioned by Carol Joy

Creations, a national greeting company to provide images of her artwork for their production and distribution. She currently holds her own line of greeting cards.

For more information on Barbara Mason go to WWW.DRAGONFLYSTUDIOCREATIONS.COM

John Crisp



John Crisp, Jr. has been around for many years and has a wealth of knowledge, creative

ability and historical perspective. A long time activist and native of Springfield, Illinois, he's spent a great many years in the role of teacher. Mr. Crisp's artistic ability was discovered very early. At the age of six, he developed rheumatic fever which left him hospitalized and affected his ability to walk for about two

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years. He spent much of his time with pencil and paper creating because of limited mobility. Crisp also played the piano as a small child.

Crisp, didn't have to work very hard to prove his gifting. It was a part of his genetic makeup. His father was a gifted artist and pianist and his sisters and brothers were all musically inclined. As an artist, he was mentored by Helen Stokes and Wendell Smith. Under their tutelage he also learned how to create jewelry and sculpture.

Crisp's media includes pencil, acrylic, charcoal, pastel, water color and oils. He says oils are his favorite. His art has been exhibited locally as well as all over the world. Currently he has art in the Abraham Lincoln Historical Museum, the Dusable Museum in Chicago, and some of his work has reached as far as Africa through the hands of Kings. Crisp has also illustrated over thirty six African American coloring books, which are available in various stores throughout the city.

Crisp's gift didn't land him a job with Walt Disney as he'd always fantasized about but it has created a Disney like experience for young artist. Mr. Crisp's

real passion appears to come in the form of teaching. Whether through art or music he enjoys working with young people and understands the concept of mentoring and impartation. He is currently working with a grant funded program called Yes I Can through the Springfield Arts Council where he will be teaching drawing and sculpture to youth. He also teaches classes for adults and children at the Springfield Arts Association.

Currently he's serving as president of the Harriet Tubman-Susan B. Anthony Training Center, founded by the late Faith Logan, a long time activist in the Springfield community. The organization provides support to young mothers, single families, and youth, using the arts and motivational speaking, to promote self-sufficiency. Crisp says it's time to get back to building the family.

John Crisp's gifts are many and have brought him before great and average men. What he's learned throughout history is valuable and has helped to inspire others to greatness in their own right.

Norman Calmese



Norman Calmese's perspective on art is amazing. He's very adamant about not allowing anyone to pigeon hold him into one area of gifting. He's very adamant about not allowing anyone to pigeon hold him into two areas of gifting. Try three. Get the picture? He calls it the process of creativity, which means we have imbedded within us many gifts, however the challenge is discovery, development, and perfecting.

Calmese grew up in Chicago and began cartooning at the age of eight. His first cartoon was a picture of Fred Flintstone. He attended Dusable High School and later attended college at Northern Illinois University where he played football four years. He says he comes from a creative family. There were four boys and one girl with gifts ranging from musicians, to culinary arts,

to business, to numbers. Norman says his mother was the example of creativity. She was a creative chef. He remembers her taking the cardboard from her new stockings and saving them for him to draw on. Norman's uncle was a famous artist in Chicago who spent many years painting in the basement of Marshall Fields.

Norman uses "The Creation" as a principle to his creative ability. He quotes, "And God said let there be light, and there was..." He says we have to learn the creative process, because it's from God. It is evident that he's bought into this process. Norman has explored many areas of art, and continues to have success using his creative ability. He says his gift as an artist is just one of many things he does. He's gifted in the area of interior design, dance, drama, comedy, music, sales, marketing, and motivational speaking. Motivational speaking is what he enjoys the most.

Now to read Calmese's list of abilities, some would think he's probably a little arrogant. Well, not exactly my impression. Calmese shares how he's become successful in these areas.

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Fitness

by Lyle Johnson

An Exercise Program Does Not end After 90 Days

An Exercise Program Does Not End After 90 Days

Your 90-day deadline has come and it is time to think about the progress you have made in your fitness program.

You may have made personal goals on weight loss and toning and conditioning.

Now your 90 days are up and have accomplished your goals and if not what is next?

Patience is the key to any personal goal whether it is weight loss or toning.

Even though the pounds may not have come off as you had hoped for in 90 days, your body composition made great changes. Your body fat decreased and so did your inches.

These two major areas of measurement are the most important to pay attention to when your goal is weight loss and changing your body's appearance.

The weigh scales are not the most accurate of tools to follow.

When you weigh yourself, you are weighing your total body make up.

The best tool in testing body fat and loss of fat, is inches (or girth measurements) and skin fold measurements (pinching of the outer layer of your skin).

These two tools are going to give you a much better reading of what your own body is doing in ways of changes. So, don't be fooled by the weight scale.

If you are not at the goal you set for yourself after 90 days or more, this does not mean the program is a failure. It just means that your body is taking the time needed to get to where you want it to be. Everyone's body will respond differently, we all want quick results, but we need to wait for it to happen. Consistency is the key to any progress in an exercise program.

Follow these tips to maintain your fitness once you reach your goal:

- **See exercise as a stress-releaser - A simple shift in attitude can do wonders for your stress levels. If you've had a long, hard day at work, exercise is something to LOOK FORWARD TO relieve your stress and revive yourself.**
- **Want to keep fitting into your favorite jeans? - You know the ones that fit you**

nicely several years ago? Keep them. Keep trying them on to keep yourself in check to keep eating right and exercising.

- **Reward yourself - It never ceases to amaze me how hard we are on ourselves when we don't accomplish, and how hard we are on ourselves when we DO accomplish. Whenever you reach a milestone, have something in mind, like a trip to the day**

spa, new shoes or clothes (as long as it's NON-EDIBLE).

- **Most of all, be patient with yourself and make sure your goals are realistic.**

Lyle Johnson is a Certified Personal Trainer and the owner of MVP Fitness, located in St. Louis. For more information call 314-831-7505 or go to www.mvpfitness.net or www.mymvpworkout.com.

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Life**Styles**

by Sherry Pittman

NBA Sports Mom

Linda Shanklin – ‘Seeing and Nurturing Potential’

Linda Shanklin, a single parent, raising two baby boys, was the first to see and cheer the potential of her sons, Frank, Jr., a former college stand out and currently an agent for New York Life Insurance Company and, the youngest, Andre Tyler Iguodala star player for the Philadelphia Seventy-Sixers. As a child herself, Linda observed others and made decisions about what she would and would not do. This behavior carried over to the raising of her children. She had consciously, and in some ways perhaps unconsciously, accepted the role of Mom by busily pouring into two sons while they were yet in the womb. She began working with them by talking, reading, and soothing them with a very loving hand. She confesses that she was ahead of her time and that it was God whom she credits because she didn't really know where all this was leading.

While the very young Iguodalas were still basically unknown she was already keeping a steady discerning eye on them. She recalls that Dre, her personal name for Andre, was about six or seven years old when she first saw his athleticisms, drive and his ability to buy into her style of discipline.

Speaking of her sons, Linda says, she knew that she had two children with a lot of potential

and she found them to be very easy to rear. She adds, “they caught on to everything really fast”.

As a mother, Linda simply believes in watching your child and studying them when they are very young, say two and three years old even. As she began to see what they were interested in, she would move them towards that interest, be it football or basketball.

The young Iguodalas did not have their natural father around due to extenuating circumstances, though they did see him from time to time. However, by the time the boys were in junior high, Leonard Shanklin married their mother and took a very active role in their continual development. Leonard was the serious team player that was needed at a very crucial time. The ‘not so young Iguodalas’ were still enamored with their mom, but as they said to her on at least one occasion, “You’re still a girl!” Leonard stepped right in and filled the role as father and friend by providing appropriate discipline, helping Mom with household chores, and extensive entertainment and sports traveling with the boys. Needless to say, the boys took to Leonard like a fish takes to water, and the transition for the teens to young men was stabilized and set.



Nevertheless, while the boys were yet quite young and active, prior to junior and high school, Mom knew the two would need to be involved in outside activities, if for nothing else, but to keep her home from fast becoming a basketball court. The boy's high energy level, and the importance of channeling that energy, was familiar to Linda because of her own participation in basketball, track, volleyball and street ball.

Linda's younger brother, Sam Fields, affectionately called ‘Uncle Buggy’, was the constant male in the young boy's lives. Uncle Buggy, not only wrestled and played football but he and Linda watched a lot of sports together, both live and on television. Linda shared the warm memories of Uncle Buggy being into World Wide Wrestling, or-

dering thirty-five dollar Pay Per View movies for the family and eating popcorn. In addition to Uncle Buggys' sports interest, Linda says that her top television choices were and still are spent with all types of sports, golf, football, rugby, you name it, and Linda says she watches it. She says sports are hands down her choice over other kinds of movies such as romance, horror and investigative. The history that the classics bring is a second runner up to sports.

Linda recalls sharing her earliest observations with Uncle Buggy about the size of Andres' hands, his jumping ability, specific moves, etc. They both agreed that the boys had potential.

Along with Uncle Buggy's attentiveness to the six and eight year old boys' athleticisms,

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NBA Sports Mom, Linda Shanklin **continued**

came the generous annual shoe shopping trip for high top Nike's. Nikes' were the choice because of the long and narrowness of their feet. Most children didn't wear cleats until they were in junior high or high school, but by the age of nine, Uncle Buggy was putting Frank Jr. in cleats. To this day, Uncle Buggy still buys shoes for all the nieces, nephews, and great nieces and nephews. Linda recalls Uncle Buggy coming home from shopping trips reporting what he had observed about the boys. An example would be Frank only wanting to get a football, and all Andre wanted was to go and get a basketball. If they were getting jerseys, Andre always wanted and admired Michael Jordans' but his first love was really Lil Penny Hardaways'.

Linda says she has never been satisfied with just the school's requirements for playing sports, so she required more from the boys at home. The boys were moving into sports at the same time that Linda was quite aware of how older athletes moving from high school to college and then the NBA and noting that some could not read. This was a serious problem as far as Linda was concern.

She believed that if everyone

was looking at star quality on the court then she could expect star quality in the classroom. Consequently, she expected the same structure, attitude, intensity, and drive off the court. Her rule was that if you can go out there and get sixteen to twenty points, seven or eight rebounds, and however many assist, then she could ask for equal participation in the classroom. Though coaches were willing to accept D's, Linda says she expected A's and B's, nothing less than a C. C's were only accepted if the weight of the class was higher than the average weight class. If grades less than C's were received, Linda would meet with teachers and sit down to talk about where her sons were in their learning process. The purpose of meetings was to insure good grades; the grades had to be back up to her expected standard by the time the report cards arrived. If the grade did not come back up, the student did not play that season. Not playing a season only happened once; afterwards there was never a problem. According her, the same person on the court, was the same person in the classroom.

At the point the boys began writing papers, ten or eleven

Sherman Mason



years old, Andre starting writing two to three page essays. Linda encouraged them to write because she knew how valuable it was to have that skill as a result of her having missed out in some areas. Consequently, she focused them in both writing and mathematics. Linda says they both took to the academics really well. Both boys were superb students; Dre graduating with a nearly perfect GPA, 4.789, and Frank, Jr., held his own as well, with a 3.6.

The boys' interest was stirred by starting with what interest them most. Once they had learned the structure of writing about sports, then it was time to move to other topics. Areas such as music and history were used next for the purpose of sharpening their reading and

writing skills. Their personal choice of music along with history books on Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Jessie Jackson offered another whole new level of material for increasing their writing skills. To this day, Linda says, "Andre is an avid reader". In fact, she says he reads the Bible like a novel.

The first two sports for the both of the boys were swimming and karate at the YMCA. Linda, while working at the Springfield Housing Authority (SHA), saw that the Norma Trede Community Center (NTCC), which was located in the John Hay Homes, offered the opportunity for youth to do a variety of activities designed to cultivate growth and development. The center, in addition to the YMCA, was providing a positive outlet for youth



Minister Gary T. Pierce, Pastor of Key of David Ministries is looking for individuals dedicated to change within the Central Illinois area to join him in the forming of a Rainbow Push Coalition Chapter for Central Illinois. Serious people can contact Minister Pierce at (217) 585-7998 or Carolyn Wiggins National Director of Membership and Organizational Development (773) 256-2729 at the National Headquarters in Chicago, Illinois.



Alicia Keys

“The Smokin’ Aces” Interview

Alicia on Her Big Screen Debut

by Kam Williams

Alicia Augello-Cook was born in New York City on January 25, 1980 to a Jamaican father (who bounced while she was still a toddler) and a mother who’s a mix of Puerto Rican, Italian and Irish. An only child, little “Lellow” was raised in Hell’s Kitchen by her doting mom who recognized she had a prodigy on her hands soon after her young daughter started taking piano lessons.

Alicia would attend the prestigious Professional Performance Arts School of Manhattan, where she studied both jazz and classical composition, crediting influences ranging from Nina Simone to Stevie Wonder to Oscar Peterson to Frederic Chopin to Tupac Shakur. After graduating as valedictorian of her class, she entered Columbia University at just 16, but soon took a leave to pursue her professional career.

Writing songs which reflected both her roots and her eclectic musical education, Alicia changed her last name to Keys and signed with Clive Davis’ J Records which released the five-time Grammy-winning *Songs in A Minor* in 2001. Skyrocketing to superstardom, she’s since collected four more Grammys, plus eleven Billboard Awards, three American Music Awards, two MTV Video Awards, three NAACP Image Awards, six Soul Train

Awards, a VH1 Award and a People’s Choice Award.

She has also been named one of People Magazine’s 50 Most Beautiful People (2002) and one of FHM Magazine’s 100 Sexiest Women in the World (2005 and 2006). This multi-talented Renaissance Woman even wrote a best-selling book, *Tears for Water*.

Those who think that Alicia is only making her acting debut now must have missed her appearance at four on the *Cosby* Show where she exhibited precocious stage presence as Maria, a friend of Rudy Huxtable. Here, she shares her thoughts on her role as Georgia Sykes, a seductive yet ruthless assassin, in *Smokin’ Aces*, a high-octane, ensemble flick co-starring Ben Affleck, Ray Liotta, Jeremy Piven, Andy Garcia and Common.

KW: What interested you in this script?

AK: The more that I read it, the more intrigued I became with it... the more it drew me in.. the more I realized how each character had its own life... and the way that every story combined into the next story... and the way that everything



you thought it was, it was not. So, by the time I got to the end of the script, I was just enamored with it. I couldn’t believe it. I could see every shot... I could see every vision... and I could see how it would all come together. I just felt like it was so perfect, and for me, personally, so unexpected, that I knew it was perfect.

KW: Why was playing Georgia perfect for you?

AK: It was truly something that, the minute that I read the script, I knew that it was so out of my element, so out of my normal character, so out of what so many people probably expect of me that I knew it was the right thing for me to do. I wanted to break away totally from anyone’s expectations. I wanted to do what was totally unexpected. I

wanted to dive into myself in a way that I have never ever done before. And to be surrounded by such incredible actors was truly inspiring. The entire cast and Joe [director Joe Carnahan] was so motivating. I think that I’m totally spoiled, because anything I do following this will probably not compare.

KW: So, your fans get to see a new side of you in this film.

AK: It’s not me, it’s Georgia. So, I don’t have to worry about that. Maybe you can say it’s a totally different side of what anybody might expect of me which is maybe why I did it. There’s a lot going on with me in this movie.

KW: Did acting against type come easily to you?

continued on page 20



“The Smokin’ Aces” Interview **continued**

AK: Well, I don’t think anything that’s worth it exactly comes easy, but to work for that was completely worth it. And I knew that with everything that I do I want to give up my comfort zone. I don’t want to stay in the same place. I know myself. I like to get out of that area and challenge myself, and I find that the best comes from that.

KW: How did you feel about your character’s wardrobe?

AK: The wardrobe is crazy because we know that Buddy [Jeremy Piven’s character] has a serious, serious addiction to prostitutes. That’s the deal. So, to get inside, where I can get close enough to do what I need to do, I’m going to have to fit in with the prostitutes. So, the whole situation is, yeah, my first Halloween as a prostitute. [Laughs]

KW: How did you feel about the use of the N-word in the picture?

AK: I consciously didn’t use the word. I substituted “mother-[bleep]” or “[bleep]-head” or “piece of [bleep].” There are plenty of other words. I consciously didn’t want to use that word, though separating myself from who I am and totally becoming Georgia Sykes, since Georgia’s a killer, she definitely doesn’t give a damn about what she’s gonna’ call you. That was a reality that I had to understand and be ready to dive totally into her. And I wanted to do that.

KW: This being your first feature film, did you get help from any of your co stars?

AK: Taraji [Henson] and I hit it off immediately. She’s a wonderful lady, an incredible actress. Joe actually brought us together very early on, before we even thought

about filming scene one. We hung out and went to the movies because we definitely wanted the relationship to be really authentic, and it was. You find that you naturally connect with people or you don’t. And she’s one of the people that you connect with. I did learn a lot from watching her and from listening to her. We developed our characters’ back stories together... We spoke about where we came from, where we were going, and why. We spoke about a lot of things like that, so she definitely was a great inspiration for me.

KW: How would you describe that back story of your characters’ relationship that the two of you developed?

AK: I think that Georgia and Sharice (Taraji’s character) are close, and have obviously been through a lot of very heavy situations together which would normally bring you into a place that you probably wouldn’t experience with someone who is just more surface. In our back story, we definitely knew each other for years. I was uprooted from where I grew up, originally, and came to live near her. So, she kind of showed me a lot from the beginning. She was the older sister that I never had, somebody who could help care for me and show me the ropes, that kind of thing. I think that as Georgia I might have been aware that there might have been something a little out of place, feelings developing on her side towards me. But I didn’t pay it any attention because we’re busy doing other things. Plus, not wanting to make it a big deal, because I love her as a sister. We have a deep relationship anyway, so what’s the big deal? So, when you come into the movie

you actually witness, just as I’m witnessing it, that it’s becoming a little more uncomfortable. She’s becoming a little more crass about it all, and I’m starting to wonder what’s really going on. In fact, a whole scene was taken out where I confronted her about it.

KW: Were you prepared to be so successful at an early age, and is it what you expected?

AK: I define success as a personal happiness. I feel that, personally, I’m happiest when I’m able to express myself, when I’m able to do things that are my choice, whatever that means. And it’s especially rewarding when people enjoy it as much as I do. So, I call that success.

KW: Who was your role model as a child?

AK: As a young kid, I had two wonderful women in my life that helped to raise me. One is my mother, a single-mother, a very strong woman who showed me everything about being a woman. The second was my grandmother. She was another very compassionate, very intelligent, very giving woman. So, I’d say the two of them combined were my greatest inspirations

KW: What did they say to you?

AK: What did they say to me? “Get ‘em, girl!” [Laughs]

KW: How do you keep grounded and connected to your roots?

AK: I grew up in a place that introduced me to a lot of different areas and a lot of different kinds of people. Because of who I am and where I was raised, it’s always going to be a part of who I am. So, when something is of your fabric, you can’t let it go.

KW: I know you already finished your next film, The Nanny Diaries with Scarlett Johansson and Laura Linney. Don’t you have another movie project you’re working on?

AK: That film is going to be produced by Halle Berry. It’s about an incredible, bi-racial woman named Philippa Schuyler who was an amazing classical pianist back in the Forties. Obviously, at that time, the challenges at the time to actually be able to play classical piano as a woman of mixed race was by far more than I could ever imagine.

KW: Are you interested in this role because of the parallels between you and her?

AK: What intrigued me about this role isn’t that she was a pianist, or exactly who I was, but that it’s a moving, historical time piece. Her story is very deep, even to the point where the relationship between her and her mother gets very strained, and she even chooses to go to Europe and to pass as a Spanish woman in order to be able to play and to be able to live a more normal life. And so, it’s very interesting the places that we feel we need to go in order to do what we love, and where that leads us. That’s what her story is about, and that’s why I love it so much.

KW: What’s the name of the movie and when will you start shooting?

AK: As of now, it’s called Compositions in Black and White. It’s based on her biography. As of right now, we’re still in the second draft of the script. So, it’ll be a little bit of time, at least a year.





Celebrating Springfield's Black Artist **continued**

He says he's simply become a student by studying the field and those having great success. His formula is simply this: copy the style and add your own gift and touch. Learn and mimic. He is a student that studies processes.

As an artist the "learn and mimic" formula has worked for him, and brought him much success with his art creations. He was inspired by Salvador Dali, a Spanish artist who was known for surrealism. He has copied Dali's style and added his own creative ability. Norman still is not tied to one particular style, but his favorite is abstract surrealism.

Norman has contributed much to the art world. He has illustrated twelve books that are sold in Barnes and Noble inclusive of "War? I'm Scared", the first book in America written on 911 from a child's perspective. The Eagles Eye which was created in charcoal and pencil appears in the Museum of Science and Industry in Chicago. He illustrated a coloring book which was published by Wewrite Corporation, entitled, Springfield a Cool Place to Be. His cartoons have appeared in over thirty newspapers around the country, including Wisconsin, New York, Florida and Tennessee. Calmese is also the founder of the Cartoon Factory, a company designed to teach children the power of creativity using the medium of cartoons. He's currently working on a cartoon for children with a local phlebotomist.

On February 6 2007, Calmese will be featuring an art exhibition entitled: Kids of Katrina. Calmese says the drawings will reflect the emotions of what the children saw and felt. The event

and reception will be held at the Illinois Historical Library and Museum.

Norman Calmese is presently the General Manager and artist for the Capital City Courier. For more information on the artist go to normancalmese.com

Olu Jimi Adeniyi



As we walked around the gallery, the teacher in Jimi began to surface. As the

interviewer, I shifted and humbly accepted my role as student. After careful observation, I began to share my impressions of the art on display. We'd connected. I mean the art and me. Jimi's short lecture included a lesson on respect for the artist and his or her creations. He says art is subjective until you speak to the artist and understand their story. He further emphasized, there is a story behind each painting. There is a soul in every painting.

Jimi shared several of the stories behind his art and stated that because of experiences that led to the creating of certain pieces of art, several of his originals are not for sale. They are priceless. On the bottom of his original Maskermorphosis I and Maskermorphosis II, you will find the words priceless in the space where the painting cost is normally shown.

Olu Jimi Adeniyi started painting at the age of eight and eventually began to publish his

own art. Born in Lagos, Nigeria, he has become well respected among his peers. He is the proud father of two daughters who also paint. Several of the girl's paintings can be found hanging in the gallery. He says it brings him joy to watch them develop in their gifting.

Adeniyi has been compared to Vincent Van Gogh and Claude Monet by the New York Times. He says Maskermorphosis gave him his first break. He considers Monet his mentor. Adeniyi has also learned the art of mimicking style. In a style similar to Van Gogh, he layers globs of paint to add thickness. His trade mark is three dimensional affect, using a pallet knife to help with shaping. He also considers himself an impressionist which is the art form Monet is known for. Jimi enjoys using oil, acrylic, and sculpture.

Jimi says he loves oils and sculpting. Many times while painting he finds himself in an abstract mood. From this place he's often led to deal with social issues which are reflected in his work. He often raises social consciousness through art.

Earlier in Jimi's career, he spent a great deal of time traveling. He now seems to be

focused on his newly opened art gallery and printing business in downtown Springfield. One of his future goals is to feature the work of young artists who have raw talent with national appeal. He would like to assist with the publishing of their work. His plans also include featuring the work of other proven artists, hosting art shows, and providing a place for social functions in an artistic environment.

Jimi is very proud of what he has accomplished in the art arena. He says he's thankful to God for giving him the gift. He says art is the gift that keeps on giving.

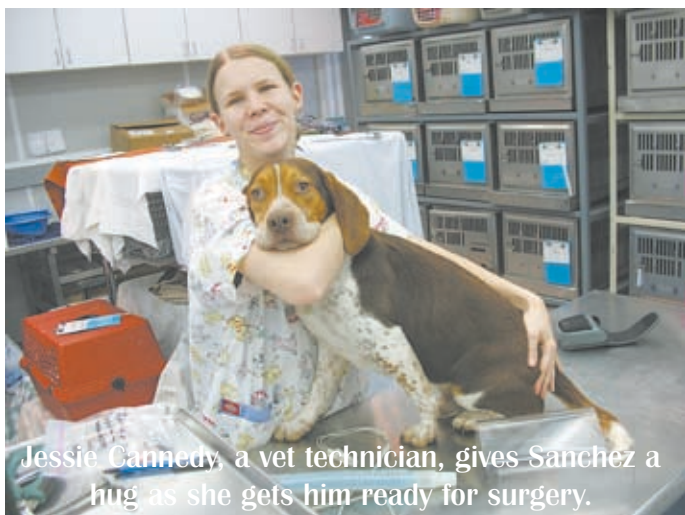
For more information on Olu Jimi Adeniyi go to: www.jimiart.com

In conclusion, we hope our readers have been inspired by this article featuring Springfield's local artists. Barb Mason has taught us that everything we do has spiritual merit and God should be the center, John Crisp, Jr. has taught us the concept of mentorship and impartation, Norma Calmese has taught us the principle of the creative process, and Olu Jimi Adeniyi has taught us to respect and seek to understand the gift.



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Jessie Cannedy, a vet technician, gives Sanchez a hug as she gets him ready for surgery.

APL's Spay/Neuter Clinic is the Answer to Cat and Dog Over-Population

by Kim E. Gordon

You've seen the roaming cats and dogs in your neighborhoods. Some are just passing through, while others live in out-buildings, surviving on garbage, which they spread in alleys and yards. Too often they become sick, are injured by cars, or are deliberately hurt or killed. Even the lucky ones live shorter lives than their indoor counterparts.

Cats and dogs—and the neighborhoods they live in—deserve better, and the Animal Protective League of Springfield and Sangamon County is here to help. Located across from Gate 6 of the Illinois state fairgrounds, on Springfield's north side, APL's spay/neuter clinic opened in April 2006 in a building adjacent to the shelter that APL has operated on the site since 1996.

APL's spay/neuter clinic is a high-volume, low-cost clinic. The large number of surgeries (at least 25 a day) allows APL to charge reduced fees of \$55 for male or female dogs, \$45 for female cats, and \$35 for male cats. The fees offset the cost of operating the clinic, which serves individuals, animal-control agencies, humane organizations, and animal shelters within a 90-mile radius. Veterinarian Richard Speck, who closed his own Parkway Animal Clinic in

Springfield to help open APL's spay/neuter clinic, conducts the surgeries with the assistance of two vet techs. The clinic is open weekdays, and surgeries must be scheduled in advance.

APL opened the clinic as part of its ongoing effort to end the epidemic of pet over-population. Animal control facilities and shelters throughout Central Illinois are so crowded with abandoned dogs and cats that many healthy animals are euthanized because homes can't be found for all of them. In Sangamon County last year, some 3,000 cats and dogs were put down because too few adopters stepped forward. The thousands more kittens and puppies born each year only continue the cycle of too many animals and not enough owners. Aggressive spay/neuter programs that reduce the number of new animals born is the only humane alternative.

Some old myths keep owners from altering their cats and dogs. Spaying or neutering will not make a cat or dog fat and lazy, will not change their personalities, make a dog less protective, or rob a male dog of his masculinity! And allowing a cat or dog to have even one litter only adds to their over-population.



Peyton, Lynette & Loretta Jones with Raven Moore pick up Baxter, their Yorkiepoo, the day after his surgery.

Eliminating the nuisance of roaming animals is just one good reason to spay and neuter cats and dogs. Owned animals are less likely to roam in search of mates, are less prone to fighting, and live longer, healthier lives. Statistics show that unaltered male dogs are responsible for most attacks on children and adults. There's also a financial incentive to spay/neuter dogs. In Sangamon County, the mandatory annual rabies registration fee for unaltered dogs (male or female) is \$35, versus just \$8 for altered dogs.

In recent years, pit bulls have acquired a not-always-deserved reputation for aggressiveness that has left many good-tempered ones unadopted, only to be euthanized. In 2006

APL offered free spay/neuter surgeries for 200 pit bulls and pit bull mixes, and some will be offered in 2007. Call the clinic to inquire.

APL will work with individu-



Melissa Fullington gets a handshake from her dog Zena as they are waiting to check into APL's Spay/Neuter Clinic.

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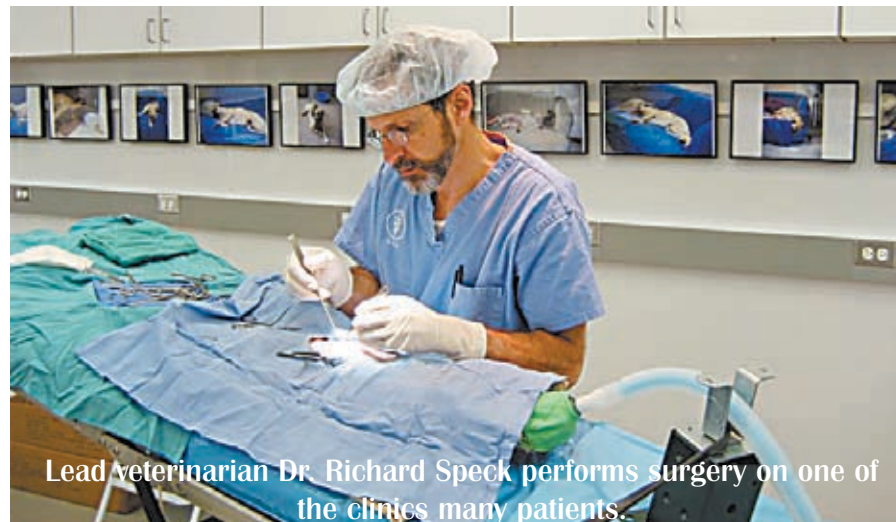


APL's Spay & Neuter Clinic **continued**

als or neighborhood groups to trap feral (unowned and unsocialized) cats, and spay/neuter them for a nominal fee. The cats are then returned to the neighborhood. Research has shown that returning cats to their neighborhoods is more effective than euthanasia in reducing their numbers.

APL is eager to assist owners of cats and dogs who want to help stem the tide of

over-population. Spring is just around the corner, which means thousands more puppies and kittens will be born unless people intervene by having cats and dogs spayed and neutered. Contact the Animal Protective League now to help reduce cat and dog over-population. Phone 544-7387 for more information or to schedule spay/neuter surgeries.



Lead veterinarian Dr. Richard Speck performs surgery on one of the clinic's many patients.

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Giving Back... No Big Deal for “Reggie”

By Nancy D. Collins

Talking to him via phone about his new business venture would leave some scratching their heads in wonderment. A tour of his establishment would leave some standing in awe. Black leather high back chairs accompanying smoked glass top computer stations, with matching hard drives and monitors presents a professional business atmosphere. Pure white walls waiting to be graced with a complimenting form of art. The beginning. A glance into his office would reveal the same type of sense and décor. Yes...the same exact treatment. No differences made. In Reggie's world, we all deserve the same.

Reginald Stewart, a computer consultant and business analyst has a heart for those in the community who in many instances have been counted out. A native of Rockford, Illinois, Reggie says as a kid he often looked around his community and observed people struggling, especially in the job market. He particularly took notice of African Americans who were barely making it for a number of reasons, primarily limited organizational skills and lack of automation.

Reggie, a soft spoken, but assured businessman, is the owner of Lincoln Land Computing Job Training Center, located along 11th Street, one of the

main corridors outlining the entrance into downtown Springfield. The business offers a wide range of classes for individual needs. They include computer basics, Microsoft Windows Application, Internet usage and Windows WordPad Application. There are also classes to address workforce improvement and much more. Set up on a five-week cycle with overlap, Reggie says the classes are intense and challenging, which is why it is important to create a relaxed environment. Now opened for two months, he's already begun to see the fruits of his labor through positive interaction with his students. He says he desires to give them hope.

Aiming for more than being tagged as a generous giver, Stewart desires to teach his students lessons that also build character. While there is a set charge for the services, each student can actually afford the classes regardless of their financial status. As a matter of fact one of the payment options is more than affordable. Try free. The students have the choice of paying for the classes at registration or opting for the latter. Students can volunteer for a limited number of hours in the center and receive services free of charge. The goal is to teach participants the art of volunteering or in Reggie's terms “giving

back”. The lesson illustrated mimics that of social responsibility which is far more valuable than simply taking a computer class. Now that's a deal.

The fact that some onlookers just don't get it hasn't lessened his drive to grow this new business enterprise. It is the one way he knows how to give back to his community. He sometimes finds it disheartening that people would find it difficult to believe that a black man can own his own business, purchase the building, and provide quality, professional services to the underserved utilizing state of the art equipment. For Stewart it is an accomplishment he expects from himself, and no, he's not surprised at all by his ability to achieve.

Stewart's business targets individuals within the 18 to 56 year old age range. He wants to attract the attention of those who are hungry for a job but don't quite know how to go about getting one. He says, only the serious should apply for the program. There are several prototypes he has in mind, but the program is open to anyone who desires to increase their computer knowledge and skills. He desires to work with single mothers with limited job skills, individuals leaving the retail environment to work in an office setting. He's also looking for

individuals who've worked in a factory setting, and the nineteen-year-old black male who desires to develop skills suited for the corporate world.

In measuring the success of the center, Stewart says future goals include reducing unemployment within the City of Springfield and Sangamon County, helping individuals to obtain challenging, more rewarding and better paying jobs that match their potential. He says he would also like to reduce the devastating impact of corporate downsizing, outsourcing, wage reductions, and factory closing. In meeting these goals he would welcome the opportunity to partner with other corporations, businesses, and agencies within the community to meet the needs of the people.

Reggie Stewart is truly a man who has a heart to give back and he's doing it in a very special way. He's say's Lincoln Land Computing Job Training Center is open to all. “I'd like to view it as a fishing establishment. Give a man a fish, he'll eat for a day, teach a man to fish, he'll eat for a lifetime”.

Lincoln Land Computing Job Training Center is located at 1101 East Monroe. For more information go to: www.LincolnLandComputing.com or call (217) 523-1111



YouthNews

by Nia & Paris

“Popularity”

People seem to have a shallow view of what popularity means. It seems they only think of what material things people possess. However, should these things really define popularity? Should we allow future generations to have such narrow minded views of what it means to be popular? We don't believe this should be what people look for in being popular and that it's time to start a new definition of popularity. We believe that being popular should be based on a person's personality and what they are bringing to the table, not what they have. If people opened their minds to what truly defines popularity, then maybe individuals would express themselves more freely. Since that doesn't happen, you constantly see people changing themselves in order to fit the image.

Here is our view of a real popular person, someone who believes in always being them-

selves, takes pride in being a great leader and never allows their mistakes to keep them down for long but uses it as fuel to become even stronger then before. Maybe if people had this view, then we would have a better world. This is where we believe Roosevelt Magnet plays a significant role in students' lives.

We don't allow ourselves to worry about popularity. At our school one is not deemed popular just because everyone knows them. Now don't get us wrong we have clicks at our school, people who hang around each other all the time. However, everyone talks to each other. I think it's because we have such a diverse school, therefore we really have no choice. This is something that makes our school special. It could also be because we have the Fine Arts Program that gives us the chance to branch out to other people. We see each other's

special talents, for example my drama class is the reason I talk to so many people. I either connected with them because of our shared love for the arts or they have seen me perform. Since we are constantly driven to be successful we don't have the time to worry about the “it” or popular people. Most of the time the “it” people don't even realize they are the popular people.

Everyone at our school is loved for the various talents they have. Now we will say this again, our school isn't perfect and we have our moments. We have people who try to change themselves just to “fit in” but most of the times they really don't get far in that plan. We honestly believe popularity is overrated and built up to be something it is not. So what if you don't have the latest gear or have lots of money that stuff doesn't make you popular. We believe what makes you popular

is your heart! If people would just put aside this obsession with wanting to have this perfect Barbie Doll life and body, maybe we could finally create a new definition for the word popularity. So I, Nia Jasmine Byrd and Paris Mariah Williams are proud to say it's starting at our school. At Roosevelt Magnet everyone is loved, because we are ourselves. Now that's what popularity should mean someone is loved simply they are.... Themselves.

P.S. To the future generation, please don't allow the pressure to be loved by all fool you into changing yourself by going under the knife. It's superficial and a waste of money. Be proud of who you are and as a wise person once told me....Love yourself cause there's no one who can love you better....

Nia Byrd and Paris Williams are students at Roosevelt Magnet in Peoria Illinois

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NBA Sports Mom, Linda Shanklin **continued**

and Linda wondered if her boys could participate in the NTCC as well.

She soon learned that, as an employee of the SHA, her boys could participate at the NTCC. It was about the time that the boys received their brown belts at the YMCA that the boys transitioned into basketball at the NTCC. Their athleticisms continued to show itself as a result of their participation in the program. Each day, when the boys were out of school, they would stop by Linda's job, and visit the center until it was time to go for the evening.

Joe Wright and Sherman Mason, who were very involved with the youth at NTCC, worked with Frank, Jr. and Andre during the after school program. Linda recalls sharing with Sherman Mason, Andre's very first coach, that her sons "had it" meaning what it took to really make it big in sports. She particularly remembers recognizing how Andre would not 'put that ball down' and how "Dre had the love for the game". Though Andre was only in about third or fourth grade, Sherman Mason put Andre with the fifth and sixth graders. Mason says he vividly remembers Andres' work ethic and determination. He stated that other children would finish playing basketball and go swimming, but Andre would always stay and wanted to learn more about basketball. Mason fondly recalls teaching him the 2-1-2 zone and Andre more than eager to learn.

Linda's passion, ability to care for others, see and attend to their needs, and just show love has not only served her and others well, but was what first

drew me to her and stirred my own desire to hear and write more of her story.

She's not only a mother to her own two sons, but she fondly recalls being 'mom like' to another child who was 'acting up'. She ran into him some years later and he remembered how she had cared enough to correct him. Linda believes the memory of her, from the past, played an important role, in his then present, and helped him to make a better decision. She's a shining example of caring about others and it shows in the many ways she cares for her sons, her siblings, nieces and nephews, friends, etc.

In addition to being a member of the Boys' and Girls' Club, she takes advantage of the opportunity to positively bring about change in the lives of children on her job, as well.

When asked if her work at SHA allows her to care for others while getting paid, she explained that she works in Contract Administration and is presently the Neighborhood Development Manager. She says she loves to give back because at one time she did not have and the community gave to her. Now she gets to give back by making sure that housing is maintained, decent, safe and sanitary.

One of her duties included writing grants and spending money of which she states she's good at doing. Making sure the rehab work is done. Linda was a part of the Madison Park Place North Park Place Development where she oversaw the initial demolition of 599 units of John Hay Homes and helped write grants, and worked with the architects and engineers with

rebuilding the area. In doing so, she gets the opportunity to interact with a lot of the residents whose children are also members of the boys and girls club. Sitting on the board for the boys and girls club provides her another avenue to reach out to children in other ways. This is what drives and pushes Linda because she believes they are our future.

Linda says she needs to know that some young man or woman will be willing to open the door for her when she's old, discover some cure for a disease, or make life easier in some other way. The 'youth of today' needs to know how and be willing to take care of the 'seasoned of tomorrow'. She imagines that today's youth will advance in areas like technology, medicine, international affairs, etc. Her goal is to reach at least one, who will in turn create a positive change that will have a rippling effect.

Not only does Linda believe that you reap what you sow, but she also believes in lying down at night and sleeping well. She wants no part of bad dreams because she didn't do the right thing. She says she doesn't want a child coming back years later, in a negative fashion, saying, "You remember what you did to me?" "Instead, Linda wants to hear, "You know what, thank you so much for what you did for me!"

Linda is grateful for the sensitivity of her sons and how they express their appreciation for her as their mother. She didn't expect the level of sensitivity that she's experienced from her sons until, perhaps, their 30's and 40's. However, much to

her pleasure, she's experiencing that kind of gratitude already from her sons while their yet in their 20's. Calls and other acts of appreciation that say, "Mom thank you so much!" and "I just wanted to let you how much I love you and how much I appreciate everything you've done for me," are indeed priceless.

She says if she never gets another Mothers' Day present or Christmas present, etc. from either of them, she says the phone calls and the many other acts of appreciation are more than enough to let her know that she's done the right thing. It's these kinds of returns on her investment in her children that really makes her feel really good about her accomplishments, particularly as their mother.

There are four things Linda did, while bringing up her boys, which she would do all over again. One, keep the communication lines open. Two, observe them closely. Three, teach them to be independent. And four, recognize the children as priority by being 'Mom'. She adds, "God gave me those two boys and armed me with everything I needed to guide and raise them. According to Linda, being Mom has been the absolute best job she has ever had.





Local Organization Hopes To Improve Minority Business

By Jimmy Rice

The Springfield Project and the Springfield Black Chamber of Commerce teamed up to help make black businesses better on January 17. The two organizations called local African-American business owners together for a "Making Black Business Better" breakfast seminar to discuss opportunities that will enhance their industries.

The early morning seminar and workshop is the beginning of several events planned by The Springfield Project to encourage growth and development of minority business throughout the city.

"There have been so many minority businesses within our city that for some reason or another hasn't prospered. Our desire is to see the development and success of new ones," said Timothy Rowles, executive director of The Springfield Project.

Marketing executives from HIP Advertising were invited to share innovative resources with the nearly 25 business leader

who attended. The main topic of conversation during the inaugural meeting centered on the latest buzz word in the world of marketing called "branding." Branding is the process of creating a specific strong, memorable image and identity for ones business.



TSP hopes to spark a new interest in entrepreneurship among minorities, especially African-Americans. According to the latest information provided by the United States Census Bureau, blacks only make up a small part of the 9.7 percent of minority firms in Springfield.

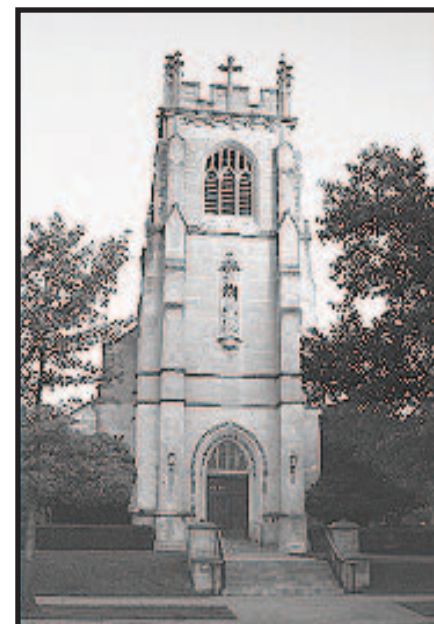
Rowles said that TSP will also introduce entrepreneurial education to students who par-

ticipate in their summer youth employment program this year. The program covers employee wages for teens that work at various businesses and organizations in Springfield during the summer.

"Our desire is to help change the dynamics of minority

ownership in Springfield," said Rowles.

The Springfield Project will continue with similar training and development initiatives throughout the year. Those interested in TSP may call 217-206-7688 or visit www.thespringfieldproject.org for more information.



Cathedral Church of Saint Paul

An Episcopal (Anglican) Church
815 South Second Street, Springfield
(corner of Lawrence Avenue and 2nd Street)

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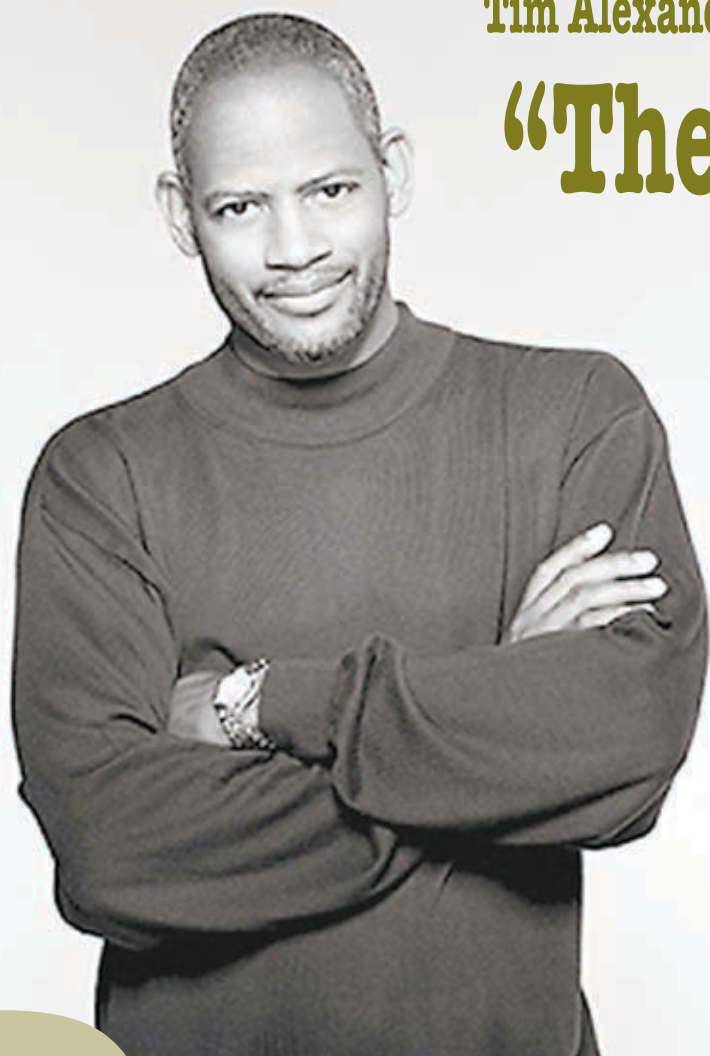
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Tim Alexander

"The Diary of a Tired Black Man" Interview

Director Defends Film Which Takes Aim at Angry Sisters

by Kam Williams



Rarely does a film generate a lot of controversy even before it's been made. But that's exactly what we have with *Diary of a Tired Black Man*, a movie ostensibly designed as an answer to such brother-bashing, revenge comedies as *Diary of a Mad Black Woman*, *Two Can Play That Game* and *Waiting to Exhale*.

What has spurred interest in the upcoming flick is a snippet available on the Internet at www.tiredblackman.com in which Jimmy Jean-Louis (who just starred as the African infatuated with Mo'Nique in *Phat Girlz*) shows up with his white girlfriend to take custody of his daughter for the weekend. Although his ex-wife (Paula Lema) and her girlfriends (Shavsha Isreal and Natasha Dixon) proceed to rake him over the coals, the self-proclaimed "tired black man" manages to get the

better of his adversaries during the heated exchange. With the movie already enjoying so much buzz, I figured why wait for the release to talk to Tim Alexander, the writer and director about to make his feature film debut with the upcoming picture everybody's been emailing, text messaging, chatrooming, instant messaging and clogging talk show phone lines about.

KW: Tell me a little about yourself. Where were you born?

TA: I was born in Harlem, but I've been in L.A. since I was four.

KW: And what did you do before you decided to make *Diary of a Tired Black Man*?

TA: I dropped out of high school, became a locksmith. From there, I just kind of fell into fashion photography. I've been doing that as well as retouching, layout, and design. I've got a website company. And I did a few music videos.

KW: Who did you make music videos for?

*TA: Howard Hewett would be the biggest star. Recently, I decided to help up-and-coming actors by making short vignettes that they could use to showcase their acting talent. So, I created a company called Screen Time Productions. *Diary of a Tired Black Man* was the first clip I shot. It was only supposed to be the three-minute clip to help the actors. But I put it on the Internet, did a Google the next day and I was shocked. It was all over the Internet. On one forum somebody created, there were 550 posts, 22 pages long, in only 24 hours. I said, "Oh my God!"*

KW: How much help did you have in making the video clip that's caused all the hubbub?

TA: I made it entirely by myself. I wrote, produced, directed, shot it, did the lighting, the sound and the editing. There was nobody on the set but me and the actors. I shot the whole thing in five hours, from set-up to tear-down.

KW: Unbelievable! And you built the website promoting it, too?

TA: Yeah.

KW: So, do you have enough money behind you to complete the project?

TA: I kinda have it and I'm in negotiations now, but I'm still open and weighing my options.

KW: So, what inspired you to make *Diary of a Tired Black Man*?

TA: I was dating a black woman who constantly wanted to go toe-to-toe with me. She was a good bit younger than I was, and even when she didn't have any ground to stand on, she would still continue to argue with me. And then, one day, she reared back and said, "You need to get yourself a white girl. You can't deal with a strong black woman." So, I just said to myself, "You know what? I shouldn't even deal with her anymore. I'm out of here."

KW: What's your dating history? Have you ever been married? Do you have kids?

TA: I've been engaged six times, but I've never been married, no kids. I find that when black women have issues with men, they bring their anger issues into a relationship.

KW: But don't you think that many have been victimized by brothers with a player mentality? There are an awful lot of sisters who have been abandoned

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“The Diary of a Tired Black Man” Interview **continued**

without child support to raise kids alone.

TA: I agree, there are a lot of men who aren't good for them. But for some reason, when a black woman gets with a good black man, she thinks he's weak, she thinks he's a punk. If you're a single-mom, I can appreciate that you're facing certain challenges. But does that give you the right to treat a good black man with such anger and contempt? I don't think so.

KW: What do you think is the source of their problem?

TA: I equate them almost with child molesters who grew up to become child molesters. They didn't like it at the time but still grew up to do the same thing, because they understand how to fight, and the struggle, and all the drama. But what they doesn't understand is how to get along. And so when they're with a nice guy, they get frustrated, lose their comfort level, because all of a sudden they have more responsibility to actually pull their weight in the relationship. And when he doesn't bring any drama, they bring the drama, because that's what they're comfortable with.

KW: So, what types of women do you date?

TA: Right now, I'm not dating anybody.

KW: What type of women were you engaged to?

TA: They were all black women. My preference is absolutely black women. That's why I'm trying to expose the problem that we're having, so that they maybe could learn from it.

KW: I recently reviewed a book called *Mixed* written by a sister who said that she started dating white guys after she moved

to L.A. from Philly because no black men would even ask her out. Is that an accurate description of the state of affairs there?

TA: That is so far from the truth. I don't agree because I live in Los Angeles. Most black people date other black people here, so she's definitely speaking from a tainted perspective.

KW: Still, this might have been her real personal experience.

*TA: There are many different points of view, but *Diary of a Tired Black Man* is dealing specifically with the issue of the anger.*

KW: Do you think that there might be a connection between the anger and misogyny directed at black women by gangsta' rap and the sort of anger you've witnessed? Maybe it's a defense mechanism and a rational reaction to misogynist treatment?

TA: I think it's partly the women's fault, if they can't tell that rap music is degrading them, and if they continue to respond to the rappers and get on the dance floor. The worse the song is, the more they want to dance to it. That's definitely part of the problem. I'm trying to put the face of a good black man up, because the rappers have already had their day.

KW: How do you expect black women to react to this film?

TA: If you have a medical condition, first you have to go to the doctor to diagnose the problem, before you can heal it. But you cannot tell black women they have an anger issue. They won't accept it. The reason I'm putting it in a movie is that you have a great forum, a situation where people have to sit there for two hours, shut up, and listen. And that's something that you cannot do in person.

KW: You sound like a black Dr. Phil, talking tough love, here. This is likely to provoke some very heated exchanges. What type of reactions have you gotten from sisters to the clip so far?

TA: I've gotten thousands of emails. I'm definitely getting some that are kicking and screaming about it, but believe it or not, the overwhelming majority of women agree with it, even the very educated ones. And the few that called who disagreed, changed their minds after I talked to them and they said, "Is that what we do? I'm glad to see this from a man's point-of-view. You know what? I suddenly see what you're saying." Some of them say, "We do need to check ourselves."

KW: Have any women shown an interest in dating you because of the movie, and of what ethnicity?

TA: A few, primarily black women. Some were definitely enamored, but I don't get out much, because I work very hard

KW: Certainly some sisters must see it as a slap in the face of black women.

TA: Some try to make it a bigger issue than it is by saying it's an indictment of all black people. But it's not. He says, I'm tired of "angry" black women like you and pointed at them. It's a very direct hit. They attacked him at the door. He just came to pick up his daughter.

KW: Do you feel uncomfortable about presenting black women in such a negative light?

TA: Whites make movies where we see white people as trailer trash? What's the difference?

KW: Maybe the presence of the white woman is what makes the

anger issue seem so explosive in your film?

TA: It's not about the white woman. It's about the angry black woman. And when have you ever seen a movie which shows a positive image of a black man who takes care of his family and carries himself with dignity, even when he's under fire. You've seen us be the problem, the drug-dealers, the gangstas, the criminals, the losers, the buffoons, the cross-dressers. When have you seen a dignified black man handling his responsibilities? They say there's no good black man? Here's a good black man. This guy ain't no pimp, and he ain't puttin' on a dress. In this particular scenario, a good black man can't find peace and happiness in his home. No matter what he does, she relentlessly rakes him over. And finally he gets tired, and has to leave. So, she drives him away.

KW: Do you think your film could possible trigger more violence against black women or make even more of a rift between sisters and brothers?

TA: No, it's not about that at all. Anybody who sees this movie and wants to go hit a woman is sick and has a problem. If anything, maybe women will realize that if they didn't have to get in that last word, maybe they could circumvent some of the violence that they're already going through.

KW: I gotta ask you one last thing, the Jimmy Bayan question. What area of L.A. do you live in?

TA: Studio City, in The Valley.

KW: Thanks for the interview and good luck with the film.

TA: Thank you.



A Man on a Mission

by Nancy D. Collins

Many years ago when Pastor Lee Fields, Jr. was called to the ministry, one would wonder if he truly understood the weight of what he would be required to carry. As I sit and attempt to do this story justice, I'm challenged in my ability to find the words to adequately describe what I sense and feel in relation to this mantle, for it is far beyond words heard or uttered. So I settle in with my interview notes and attempt to recapture the essence of what he describes in human words.

The view from his office window at Pleasant Grove Baptist Church allows him to ponder many things. The kinds of things that would challenge a man of God in his heart. The kinds of things that would push him to walk in nothing more than purpose. From this window he encounters real life issues. I mean real life situations that would break a mothers' heart, and cause a father to question God. Strategically placed on the corner of Martin Luther King Drive and Cass Street he sees true ministry. He sees the potential for new life as it passes by his window each and every day.

Today he looks out the window and draws attention to an old dilapidated house across the street. He then summons Mr. Hale, one of the seniors of the church who shares a bit of history in relation to the house. Fields talks about plans for historical preservation of the property which was once a glar-

ing eye sore.

A native of New Orleans, Louisiana, Pastor Fields is married to the former Kim Wells. They have been married for twenty-three years and have two daughters. Jasmine Danielle is a freshman at Jackson State University, and Katlyn attends Grant Middle School where she is an honor roll student and cheerleader. Pastor Fields gives strong accolades to his wife for helping to keep him in balance. He says he values her opinion, and respects her for her frankness. He openly admits there was a time he felt her comments were intrusive, but now totally embraces her honesty. He says she knows him better than anyone and would never do anything to hurt him.

When asked about his call to ministry he walks me through his process and explains the immediacy of salvation, coupled with his divine call to preach the gospel. Mentally he exits the room and takes me to the time and place of his conversion. He says it was a unique experience but not without challenges. He recalls his first sermon and how many of his friends and mentors came to support him. His says his first sermon was entitled: A Conversation between a Fool and a Wise Man. After preaching his first sermon, it was evident he'd truly been called.

In 1997 Pastor Fields was called to Pleasant Grove Baptist Church after serving as the pastor of Evening Star Baptist Church in Louisiana for 14

years. He says he asked God to place him on a corner. God granted his request, and called him to a great work in Springfield. The congregation of Pleasant Grove would be his second pastorate. Using the metaphor of prostitution, he says, "I'm just a spiritual prostitute working my corner". Soon to celebrate his 10th year as pastor of Pleasant Grove, it is evident he works the corner well.

After twenty five years of preaching and twenty four years as a pastor, the visionary has developed a sincere love for people. He says he hates looking at problems but love being involved in finding solutions. He also says his blessings come from being a giver. He could never be stingy. As a shepherd, these virtues have spilled over onto those in leadership and lay members. Under his guidance, Pleasant Grove has developed into one of the most progressive and growing churches in the Springfield area. After first giving honor to God, Pastor Fields says he's thankful for "Vision Catchers". Without faithful parishioners, the vision and task he's been given charge of could not go forth.

Within the past 10 years the ministry has accomplished many things. Renovations and expansions of the church have been completed for the sake of outreach. One of the highlights is the L.R. Hubbard Educational Complex built to meet the growing needs of the church. A

new gymnasium has also been erected to address the needs of youth and to host special events. Currently Monday nights has been designated for open gym. The ministry has been very instrumental in providing outreach services in the form of a clothing pantry, tutorial services, and building collaborations with local retailers to provide coats for the community children.

Fields is not just an inside man. He's not just consumed with the world of Pleasant Grove Baptist Church. He's hands on and very active in the community outside of the church walls. He has a very strong call to youth. Call him an activist helping to give youth alternatives to gang violence. He is a mentor and is often called on by the courts to intervene on the behalf of troubled youth. Through his leadership youths have access to many resources via scholarships, care packages for college, travel, and Shepherds Camp.

As we approached the end of our interview I asked Pastor Fields about things he'd like to see changed around him. He gave me four key thoughts: however, the one thought he emphasized the most was that he'd like to see people change the way they see themselves. How ironic for a man who has given unselfishly to the building of people, just so they can see themselves differently. Now that's a true shepherd.

Black History Month: The Capital City Courier Would Like To Make It Personal

by Kim E. Gordon

Once again, it's February, and the red, green, and black decorations have come out of storage, the libraries have dusted off their copies of Booker T. Washington's "Up From Slavery," W.E.B. DuBois' "The Souls of Black Folk," and maybe even some of Richard Wright's timeless novels, and Turner Classic Movies might even show some more films by Black film producer and director, Oscar Micheaux. That can only mean one thing... Valentine's Day. No, actually, it's Black History Month.

Black History Month grew out of the desire of African American scholar Carter G. Woodson to highlight the contributions of African Americans to the United States. In 1926, he established Negro History Week to recognize those achievements. For this annual week of celebration, he selected the second week of February as it contained the birthdays of Frederick Douglass and Abraham Lincoln. A week eventually became a month, and now, every February, we place the spotlight on famous African Americans, and a few obscure ones.

While it's always good to recognize the talents, hard work, and personal sacrifices of those Blacks who have achieved legendary status, the Capital City Courier would like to see Black History Month come to mean so much more to each and every one of us. So, we propose this year to make Black History Month personal. What

that means is that we should get to know our own history and the thread of life that runs through all of us.

Start with your oldest living relative...grandmother, grandfather, great-aunt or uncle. Set aside some time to just sit and talk to him or her. There's a saying that when an old person dies it's like losing a book (in some cases, an entire library!). Which is to say, there's a lot of knowledge there, just ripe for the picking. You can treat it like an interview, with a list of prepared questions and a tape recorder, or you can just "wing it." The trick is to get them started talking.

There is a strange phenomenon among human beings in that we tend to think that what we know is nothing special. The information we have is common knowledge; who would be interested in listening to us? I have to admit I'm just as guilty of that thinking as the next person. And I have to remind myself not to fall into that trap. For instance, I try to remember that, while my daughter is a huge fan of the songs of the Motown era, I'm the one who actually lived during that time. I recall the Jackson Five coming to Peoria to perform in a local school auditorium. I recall the death of Tammi Terrell, the break-up of the Supremes, not to mention the assassinations of Malcolm X, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., and John F. Kennedy. These are more than just a black and

white explanation on a blank page. I was there...I watched, I heard, I wept. Yes, there are things I can tell my children, my nieces, my nephews...and eventually, my grandchildren, who will look at me with innocent, brown eyes and ask about the days of my youth, when dinosaurs roamed the earth, giants defied dogs and fire hoses just to go to school, and all three television channels signed off at 10:00 pm.

My mother, who passed away a few years ago, had a very good memory for details. She also, unfortunately, thought that what she knew was "nothing out of the ordinary." When I started the research into my family's genealogy (a favorite pastime of mine for the last eleven years), I tried to pick her brain as much as possible. But each time I asked questions, she would brush them aside saying she didn't know anything of any interest. One day, however, I was speculating out loud about the branch of our family that came from Canada; and how did my great-grandfather get to the US from Nova Scotia anyway? Maybe he booked passage on the Titanic, I joked. With an exasperated sigh, my mother proceeded to say, "No, he was not on the Titanic. At the age of twelve, he hired on as a cabin boy aboard a steamer bound for the U.S. and worked his way across the Atlantic. Once he was here, he became the personal waiter for millionaire

Diamond Jim Brady and traveled with him, Flo Ziegfield, and their entourage up and down the Eastern Seaboard, following the racing circuit. Years later, after he was married and my mother was born, my grandmother put her foot down and refused to travel any more when they reached Peoria. So they stayed here, where my grandfather worked for T P & W Railroad under George McNair at the time the unions were trying to organize, which is why they think McNair's son was killed in front of his house one night coming home from a Bradley basketball game. But that's all I know."

I was floored. Worked his way across the ocean at the age of twelve? Traveled up and down the East Coast with a gambling millionaire? Railroads, union organizers, and murder most foul, right here in River City? What other tidbits had she been keeping from me? Once I convinced her that she did, indeed, know things that were fascinating, things no one else could tell me, she started to open up. I now have an entire notebook filled with stories my mother told me after that, and I delight in telling these to my own daughters.

My point is, you don't have to be a genealogist to explore your family's history. Everyone has stories, and some of the most intriguing of tales flow out of older people when they realize a young person is actually interested in listening to what they

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have to say. Another reason to pay attention to your more “seasoned” relatives is that they tend to be the ones who retain more cultural ties and remnants. Listen to the words they say, the phrases they use; get them on tape, if you can. Despite popular belief, not everything was lost during slavery. Many words that have found their way into the English language have their roots in Africa and can give you clues as to your own African lineage. Just take a look at some of these familiar words and the languages they come from:

- **“Gumbo” = okra; a stew made with okra. – Republic of Congo (Tshiluba = kingumbo)**
- **“Goober” = peanut. – West Africa (Kikongo, Tshiluba, Kimbundu = (n)guba)**
- **“Yam” = sweet potato. – (Fulani = nyami)**
- **“Banana” = fruit. – West Africa (Mandingo, Wolof = banana or baranda)**
- **“Hincty” = snobbish; conceited. – West, Central Africa (Swahili, Chiluba = mping(ani))**
- **“Mumbo-Jumbo” = gibberish. (Mandingo = mama + dyumbo)**
- **“Boogie-Woogie” = popular blues music. (Hausa, Mandingo = buga)**
- **“Impala” = antelope. – South Africa (Zulu, seTswana, Swahili = impala)**
- **“Chigger” = sandflea; insect. – West Africa**

(Yoruba, Wolof, Tshiluba = jiga or jigger)

- **“Chimpanzee” = ape. – West Africa (KiKongo, Tshiluba = chimpenzi or kimpenzi)**
- **“Simba” = lion. – (Swahili = simba)**
- **“Cat” = feline. – (thought to be derived from the Nubian word, kadis)**
- **“Tango” = dance. – Niger-Congo (Ibibio = tamgu)**
- **“Banjo” = stringed instrument. – West Africa (Kimbundu, Chiluba = mbanza)**
- **“Juke” = dance; a roadside inn (juke joint); or a mechanical device that plays music you would find in a juke joint (juke box). – West Africa (Bambara, Wolof = dzug)**
- **“Jazz” = Black-created form of music. – (possibly from the Chiluba word, jaja)**

(Words taken from “A Dictionary of Africanisms” by Gerard M. Dalgish.)

So, if grandma’s always talking about the sweet goobers she bought from those hincty folks at the juke joint down south while dancing to boogie-woogie when she was young, you might have something to go on. Personally, I love genealogy. I treasure the fact that I have in my possession a “Bill of Sale” from Stonington, CT showing where, in 1770, my great-great-great-great-great-grandfather, Prince, purchased his own freedom for

the sum of thirty pounds sterling silver. This “Bill of Sale” represents his “receipt” to prove that he did, indeed, purchase himself for himself and no longer needed to give his labor for free. I realize this is not everyone’s “bag,” but for those who relish the research and asking the questions, they can become the family “griot.” (Griot = a West African oral historian who is responsible for the preservation of traditions, genealogies, and important events of his or her people.) There could even be some budding griots among your children or grandchildren. And, once you have some documentation, you might want to consider having a coloring book made with your family history, just in time for the family reunion. (For more information on personalized coloring books, contact Norman Calmese at the Capital City Courier.)

So, this year, let’s see if we can get something more personal out of Black History Month. Discover for yourself the fantastic journey your family has taken through the ages and add

CAPITAL CITY COURIER’S BLACK HISTORY MONTH WRITING CONTEST

Now that you’ve bugged your relatives (who hate to see you coming with that tape recorder!), you’ve gotten a truckload of stories to pass on. How about sharing one of them? The Capital City Courier is holding a writing contest for Black History Month for all ages. So dust off your best story and send in an essay for your family history. First prize is \$50. Two Honorable Mention awards will also be given. Deadline is February 23, 2007 and winners will be announced in the March, 2007 issue. Send entries (up to 750 words) to:

“Black History Month Writing Contest”

c/o Capital City Courier
725 Christmas Seal Drive
Springfield, IL 62703;

or email entries to
capitalcitycourier@ameritech.net.

And don’t forget your name, age, and address.

Good luck!

your own chapters to the story for your children and grandchildren to come. Take it from us at the Capital City Courier, you’ll be glad you did!

Inspiration

Chasing The One Who Rewards!

by Sherry Pittman



He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him (Hebrews 11:6). This is what God will do for those who seek Him; reward them. The question is "How do we go about seeking the one who has made all of creation, God Almighty?"

When we diligently seek him, it is similar to worship because worship requires all of one's attention on the object of one's affection. John 4:24 states it like this, "They that worship Me must worship Me in spirit and in truth. Experientially, I have found the best times I've had while 'seeking' God has been when the spirit of God has come in and enabled me to pour out praise, worship, blessings, requests, etc. It happens in such a way that I would be terrified of heavens' lightening bolts if I ever tried to act like I didn't know the difference or had never experi-

enced such intimacy with the Spirit of God.

The Spirit of God comes in, often unexpectedly, meaning one can be simply speaking from one's heart to God, and without much, if not any notice, is like a match on gasoline, whoosh! The Spirit ignites either a word or a phrase that is being spoken with such passion that all you want to do is simply allow the Spirit of God to remain, lead, direct, speak, work, or what ever else is being

done in the spirit realm before it was manifested in the natural.

It is during these times that I know God is at work creating and doing what no one and or nothing else can do. If you have never experience such sheer delight, it is a pleasure if described would actual sound mythical or unreal.

This almost unexpected presence of God can and has left me with feelings of reservations about such a powerful presence visiting with little ole' me. I remember one of the earlier visits left me so surprise that I deliberately chose not to put myself in a position to hear or experience God in such a powerful way. It would be months if not years before I returned to such a 'diligent seeking'. I'm actually laughing out loud, as I share this with you my readers, at how astonished I was at the result of

that one particular appointment. I find it funny now, but back then, I found myself almost, if not, downright afraid. I'm reminded of Matthew 7:7..."Seek, and you shall find".

I now realize that it was only the enemy, who only comes to kill steal and destroy, who was happy to have me not enter into Gods' presence in such a magnificent manner. In II Tim.1:7 were taught us, "God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.

Now for those who may be a tad bit unsure as to the realness, significance or power of the activity in this 'unseen world', let me quickly add that air is not seen either, but if it were no longer available to you...well you get the picture. Without a doubt, what you can not see is equally, if not far more, important than what you can see. In fact, I would argue that what you can't see is far more important than what you can see.

Furthermore, were taught "Without faith (believing) it is impossible to please God." In other words, believing is essential for diligent seeking because you can not continually press for something you doubt exists. Diligence implies that the seeker has some reason to expect or reap a benefit from his or her efforts. Perhaps this expectation arises from stories told by others, a deep personal need

when no one else can help, or from a longing desire to experience relationship with ones' maker in a more intimate way.

Your experiences with the Spirit of God visiting and enabling you may certainly be different. You may sing, write, coach, teach, inspire or any number of other activities and it may be done as an act of seeking and worshipping God. But regardless of the avenue, by which you experience his presence, you should have a very clear awareness that you are not alone when you're expressing whatever it is He has called you to do. He has clearly said that He will never leave you nor forsake you and that He will be with you always. This is the kind of diligent seeking and worshipping that truly pleases God and indeed precedes His rewards and blessings.

Regardless of the reason for the seekers' diligence, if s/he seeks and deliberately chose not to doubt, a reward is waiting. The thought, and perhaps prior experience, of this alone can be exciting enough in itself to at least get one started on the path of seeking to know or experience the Almighty more intensely. There are, of course, limitless depths and heights of intimacy for each of us to explore.





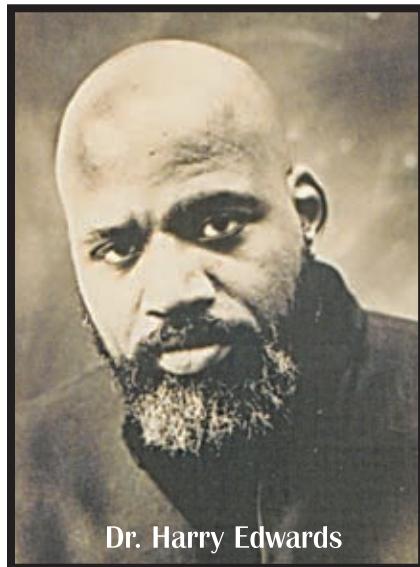
OurCommunity

Local Events, Comments and Announcements

Announcements

Office of Public Affairs SIU School of Medicine SIU Med School Sets

Black History Month Activities



Dr. Harry Edwards

Black History Month will be celebrated with two public events and several student events in February at Southern Illinois University School of Medicine. Both public events will be held at the medical school's main building at 801 N. Rutledge St., Springfield.

Harry Edwards, Ph.D., will present "The Crisis of Black Sports Participation and Popular Culture: Issues of Political Policy and Public Health" at 6 p.m. Monday, February 12, in SIU's South Auditorium. An activist, athlete and former professor at the University of California at Berkley, Edwards became a spokesperson for a revolution in sports. He has been a pioneering scholar in the

sociology of sports as an academic discipline and is a leading authority on developments at the interface of race, sport and society. Throughout his career, he has persisted in efforts to compel the sports establishment to confront and address issues pertaining to diversity and equal opportunity.

Edwards, a native of St. Louis and East St. Louis, called for a Black athlete boycott of the U.S. 1968 Olympic team. Years later, he was a consultant on diversity for sports organizations including the Major League Baseball Commission, Golden State Warriors and San Francisco 49ers. The programs he developed for handling player personnel issues were adopted by the National Football League in 1992. He is the author of numerous articles and four books.

The talk is organized by SIU's chapter of the Student National Medical Association. Audrey Tanksley, second-year medical student from Chicago, is this year's chair for Black History Month. The Student National Medical Association is composed of medical and premedical students focused on the needs of minority students across the nation.

An Ethnic Heritage Day, celebrating African-American and African cultures, will be held from noon to 1:30 p.m. Tuesday, February 13, in the second-floor lobby. The program will feature Beverly Helm Renfro, daughter of the late Jim Helm Sr., an African-American who was the photographer for several Illinois Governors. Renfro will discuss major historical events in the Springfield black community as they were captured in photos. Three medical students also will be speaking – Sofya Asfaw, Omonigho Ekhomu and Kanayo Okafor. Ethnic exhibits and a cultural potluck will complete the program. The School regularly hosts an Ethnic Heritage Day, featuring

different cultures and organized by the School's Office of Diversity Multicultural and Minority Affairs.

For more information, contact Dr. Wesley Robinson-McNeese, Diversity, Multicultural and Minority Affairs, at 217-545-7334 weekdays.

For Immediate Release
836-5361

January 19, 2007
836-5234

Contact: Katherine Rush (312)

Man Yee Lee (312)

Illinois Housing Development Authority Board Appoints Governor's Former Director of Public Safety DeShana Forney as Executive Director

CHICAGO – The Board of Directors of the Illinois Housing Development Authority (IHDA) today appointed DeShana Forney as Executive Director. Forney, who served as Director of Public Safety for Governor Rod R. Blagojevich since 2005, will lead the State's efforts to finance the creation and preservation of affordable housing for low- and moderate-income residents in Illinois. She succeeds Kelly King Dibble, who leaves IHDA to return to the private sector.

"IHDA has done a remarkable job in recent years enhancing the coordination of housing resources so that more and more hard-working Illinois families than ever have an affordable – and quality – place to live. I believe a home can be within the financial reach of all Illinois families, seniors, and individuals with disabilities, regardless of their income," said Forney. "I am extremely proud to join the very capable team at IHDA and look forward to helping the agency fulfill the Governor's vision for affordable housing."

As the Director of Public Safety, Forney oversaw Illinois Department of Corrections, Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice, Illinois State Police, Illinois Criminal Justice Informational Authority, Prisoner Review Board and Law Enforcement Training and Standards Board. In this position Forney was responsible for budgetary, operational, legislative and policy objectives and combined budgets of nearly \$2 billion as well as more than 17,000 employees. Among her accomplishments was overseeing the creation of the new Department of Juvenile Justice.

Forney also served as the liaison between the Governor and the Illinois House





Our Community *(Local Events, Comments and Announcements) continued*

of Representatives. Prior to this Forney served on the Issues Development Staff for House Speaker Michael J. Madigan, the Deputy Director for the Democratic Party of Illinois and Coordinator for the Illinois Delegation at the 2000 Democratic National Convention in Los Angeles, California.

Forney holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science from Howard University in Washington, DC and a Masters of Arts degree in Political Studies from University of Illinois-Springfield. She is a member of Pi Sigma Alpha Honor Society, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., Treasurer of Illinois Women's Institute for Leadership and is a member of numerous civic and church organizations.

IHDA (www.ihda.org) is a self-supporting state agency that finances the creation and the preservation of affordable housing across Illinois. Since its creation in 1967, IHDA has allocated more than \$7.27 billion and financed more than 174,000 units of affordable housing across the State. IHDA accomplishes its mission through a number of federal and state funding sources including the Illinois Affordable Housing Trust Fund, the Illinois Affordable Housing Tax Credits Fund, the allocation of federal Low Income Housing Tax Credits, and HOME Investment Partnership funds. IHDA is also a bonding authority, and independently sells bonds, based on its own good credit, to finance affordable housing across Illinois.



Boys & Girls Clubs of Springfield Announce Black History Month Schedule of Activities

The Boys & Girls Clubs of Springfield is celebrating Black History Month with a series of activities and events. All will be held at the Central Unit, 300 S. 15th Street.

Significant events scheduled are as follows:

2/16/07 5:00pm-6:30pm
Jazz Music with the Kenny Humble Trio

The Kenny Humble Trio will bring musical instruments to teach about the history of Jazz and will be performing for the members. Free and open to the public.

2/19/07 African Crafts

B&GCS members will have a chance to make African crafts including shakers, drums and masks made from recycled materials. For club members only.

2/23/07 5:00pm-8:00pm Black History Bowl

B&GCS will play host to more than 13 teams from around the state that will test their knowledge of African American history and culture. Free and open to the public.

2/28/07 5:00pm-8:00pm Soul Food Dinner

The Soul Food Dinner is an opportunity for members to celebrate Black History Month with traditional food and entertainment. Dinner is open to club members and a parent or guardian.

The Boys & Girls Clubs of Springfield provide daily after-school and

summer programming to more than 3,500 youth through life-changing programming in the areas of Character and Leadership Development; Education and Career Development; Health and Life Skills; the Arts; and Sports, Fitness and Recreation. Membership is \$5 and is open to all youth ages 6-18. Programs are part of a national youth development strategy and focus on instilling senses of competence, usefulness, belonging and power or influence in members.

For more information, please call Jill Young at 544-0548.

Former Students

St. Patrick Catholic School in Springfield wants to hear from former students. As the school nears its 100th anniversary of educating children and serving families, connecting with students from the past will be an important part of the celebration. Please send your name, year(s) attended, current mailing address, telephone and email address to St. Patrick Catholic School Development Office, 1800 South Grand Ave. E., Springfield, IL 62703 or kuhnmyra@yahoo.com.

Contact: Myra Kuhn, (217) 525-1980

Youth WorkShop

The Wood river Baptist District Association Region II Youth Workshop and Revival will be held February 14-16 2007 at the Zion Missionary Baptist Church, 1601 E. Laurel, Springfield. Classes begin at 6:30 p.m. and Services begin at 7:30 p.m. The speaker for the Revival is Rev. Chris Malone, Pastor, True Fellowship Baptist Church, Madison, IL. On Tuesday, February 13, the Youth will present a Concert of Praise at 7:00 p.m. The public is invited to attend. For additional information, call 217/528-6113.

Tickets on Sale for SHG's Spring Musical, "Seussical"

SHG will present its annual spring musical "Seussical the Musical" on March 23-25 and March 30-31 in the Sacred Heart-Griffin Auditorium, 1200 W. Washington, Springfield. "Seussical" will be produced by Karen Danner and directed by Dr. Stephan Kaplan.

Tickets are now on sale. The cost is \$10 for adults and \$8 for seniors and students. All tickets are reserved and may be purchased by phone at 787-1595 ext. 153 or by mail by sending a check, your name, phone, number/type of tickets, and performance date to the school office. Tickets will be waiting at the box office before the show or may be picked up at the school office at 1200 W. Washington, Springfield, IL, during school hours.

A children's event is scheduled for the afternoon of Sunday, March 25 from 2-4 p.m.

"Seussical" is based on the works of the beloved children's author Theodore Geisel, known to the world as Dr. Seuss.

Sponsorship opportunities are available by calling the SHG Advancement Office at (217) 787-9732. Further information about the "Seussical" production and the cast and crew is available at www.shgmusic.org or by calling (217) 787-1595.

Contact: Rebecca Budde (217) 787-9732 ext. 142

E-mail – budde@shg.org



WSEC-TV/PBS Springfield to Present Fun Time Station

Springfield, IL, January 29, 2007 – On Saturday, February 10th WSEC-TV/PBS will host the 9th annual Fun Time Station in the Orr Building at the Illinois State Fairgrounds. The event features performances, arts and crafts, reading and other learning activities.

The theme of this year's event is "The Magic of Reading". Children can participate in hands-on activities based on PBS's educational programming. Entertainment includes the Capitol Elite All Stars, Shudo-Kan Karate Club, Twinkles the Clown and Dance Creations. In addition the Animal Protective League and the Springfield Police and Fire Departments will be on hand.

Tickets are \$3 in advance or \$4 at the door. Purchase tickets by calling 217-483-7887, ext. 223. The event runs from 10am – 3pm, and is sponsored in part by Bank of Springfield. Food and beverages will be available for purchase at the event.

WSEC in Jacksonville & Springfield, WQEC in Quincy and WMEC in Macomb are all part of Network Knowledge, which provides quality public television and educational services through a network of volunteers, universities, hospitals and business partners in communities throughout central and western Illinois.

Contact: Margy Smith Coordinator/Special Events, WSEC-TV/PBS Springfield 217-483-7887, ext 223 • 800-232-3605, ext. 223

Fast Facts: WHAT: Fun Time Station WHEN: Saturday, February 10th, 10AM-3PM WHERE: Orr Building, IL State Fairgrounds

Letters to the Editor

Hi Michael:

Thank you for your stirring of the Black community towards self-empowerment and improvement. Serious discussion and dialogue is more of what we need, across North America and the whole world.

Black people continue to make serious strides towards freedom and political power, but still have to attain the financial and/or fiscal sense of holding and keeping our money within our own beautiful and precious Black community.

Thank you,

Ian Stephenson
Teacher/community leader/Writer

Why Can't Blacks Hold Onto a Dollar?

That's easy to answer.

We're not yet 50 years into "freedom" in this nation in any way shape form or fashion. Black folks have not yet learned to see "bling" for what it is—nothing worth discussing.

"We" are still caught up in thinking "stuff" makes us what we are; while white people, who know better because they've had nearly all the advantages of living in America, have long since graduated to a higher level of mental and social sophistication about the real use of money and what to do with it.

Even Africans, Asians, and Hispanics who don't speak the native language have a better grip on the economy and how to use it to benefit both the individual and the race, than most Eurocentric black folks. If "we" knew any better, "we" wouldn't be in the jams "we" are in right now, socio-economically speaking, that is.

It may take awhile; we're not quite used to having anything yet.

Marjani Ra'mla

Mr. Pittman

My name is Robert E. Weems, Jr. I'm a Professor of History at the University of Missouri-Columbia. I just read the article "Why Can't Blacks Hold Onto A Dollar" which appeared in the January 19, 2007 issue of the Capital City Courier.

First of all, I applaud you for publishing this article. As someone who has written extensively on African American consumerism, this work raises important questions that need to be addressed.

Based upon my own research, I have found that one of the primary reasons why we, as blacks, "can't hold onto a dollar" is related to our targeted manipulation by Madison Avenue. While working on my 1998 book *Desegregating the Dollar: African American Consumerism* (published by New York University Press), one of the most disturbing things I discovered was that,



Our Community *(Local Events, Comments and Announcements) continued*

African-American History Month

"Celebrating a Legacy of Commitment to Excellence: Receiving, Believing and Achieving the Dream"

Events are open to the public at no charge and will be held on LLCC's main campus, 5250 Shepherd Road, Springfield, unless otherwise noted.

Monday, Feb. 5 – The 18th National African-American Read-In will be held from 2 to 3 p.m. in the LLCC Library, Sangamon Hall.

Thursday, Feb. 8 – "A Moment in Black History" brown-bag luncheon

- Noon to 1 p.m.
- Robert H. Stephens Room
- Menard Hall

Featured speaker: Thomas Dorsey, attorney at law and president of the Springfield Black Chamber of Commerce.

Thursday, Feb. 15 – "History of Black Music," presented by Virgil Rhodes, jazz musician, 7 p.m. in the Robert H. Stephens Room, Menard Hall.

Wednesday, Feb. 21 – African-American Food and Vendor Day

- 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
- Student Union, Menard Hall

Sample African-American food and visit various displays exhibiting the wares of African-American entrepreneurs.

Saturday, Feb. 24 – An African-American Fine Arts Community Festival will be held 6 to 9 p.m. at Union Baptist Church, 1405 E. Monroe, Springfield. Former Springfield resident Tony Small, a composer and playwright, will direct the music portion of the event while Terri Whitt Bailey, dance choreographer and president/CEO of the Cornerstone Center for the Arts in Muncie, Ind., will direct a praise dance team.

Wednesday, Feb. 28 – An African-American Film Festival

- 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.
- Trutter Center



For more information about LLCC African-American History Month activities, contact Laurie Clemons at 786.2232.

as early as the 1930s, corporate marketers knew that black people, because of our unique history, possess an especially acute case of "status anxiety." Specifically, because we were the only group to in this country to endure slavery, blacks, on a subconscious level, view buying consumer items (especially expensive goods...i.e. "bling bling") as a way to distance ourselves from our slave past. Thus, in a very real sense, our history is continually being used against us. To put it another way, we are constantly being "played."

This ongoing manipulation of our "status anxiety," also has negative ramifications for black-owned business. Since the "status" driven individual is controlled by "Brand Names" and perceptions of "quality," and since, based upon history, things associated with black people have traditionally been deemed to be "inferior" or "deficient," many black-owned enterprises have disappeared or are struggling to survive.

When I speak on this topic and people ask me what can black people do to stop being "played" by corporate marketers, I respond by urging black folks to minimize their watching of television. Forty years ago, whites watched much more television than blacks. Today, blacks watch more television than any other ethnic group in American society. Literally, when one turns on commercial television, you are inviting corporate marketers to manipulate your mind.

Besides my book Desegregating the Dollar, another pertinent reference for you and your readers is my essay entitled "Bling Bling and Other Recent Trends in African American Consumerism" which appeared in the 2005 book, African Americans in the U.S. Economy (published by Rowman & Littlefield Publishers).

Again, I applaud you for publishing "Why Can't Blacks Hold Onto A Dollar?" Hopefully, It will generate much-needed discussion and soul-searching.

Robert E. Weems, Jr.
Professor of History
University of Missouri-Columbia

Hello

A brother in Chicago sent me a copy of your publication. I was quite impressed by the articles I read. My attention was drawn to those on economic empowerment for Black people. I have written a newspaper column on that subject for 12 years now, and I am always happy to see articles such as those in your paper. Keep up the great work! Our people really need it, but most of all we need to implement those things about which you have written.

Again, thanks for educating our people, and continued to success to you.

Jim Clingman www.blackonomics.com



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GILDER LEHRMAN INSTITUTE OF AMERICAN HISTORY ANNOUNCES TUITION-FREE SUMMER SEMINARS FOR TEACHERS

For the thirteenth straight year, the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History will sponsor tuition-free, one-week summer seminars across the U.S. and England for teachers at every level. Participants receive a \$400 stipend, books, and room and board. Public, parochial, independent school teachers and National Park Service employees are eligible. Each seminar is limited to thirty participants by competitive application.

Historians from universities including Stanford, Columbia, Yale, and the University of Virginia will lead seminars on topics ranging from the Colonial Era, the U.S. Constitution, and the Underground Railroad to the Great Depression, the Cold War, and the Civil Rights Movement.

Applications must be postmarked or submitted electronically by February 15, 2007. For information on how to apply, visit www.gilderlehrman.org

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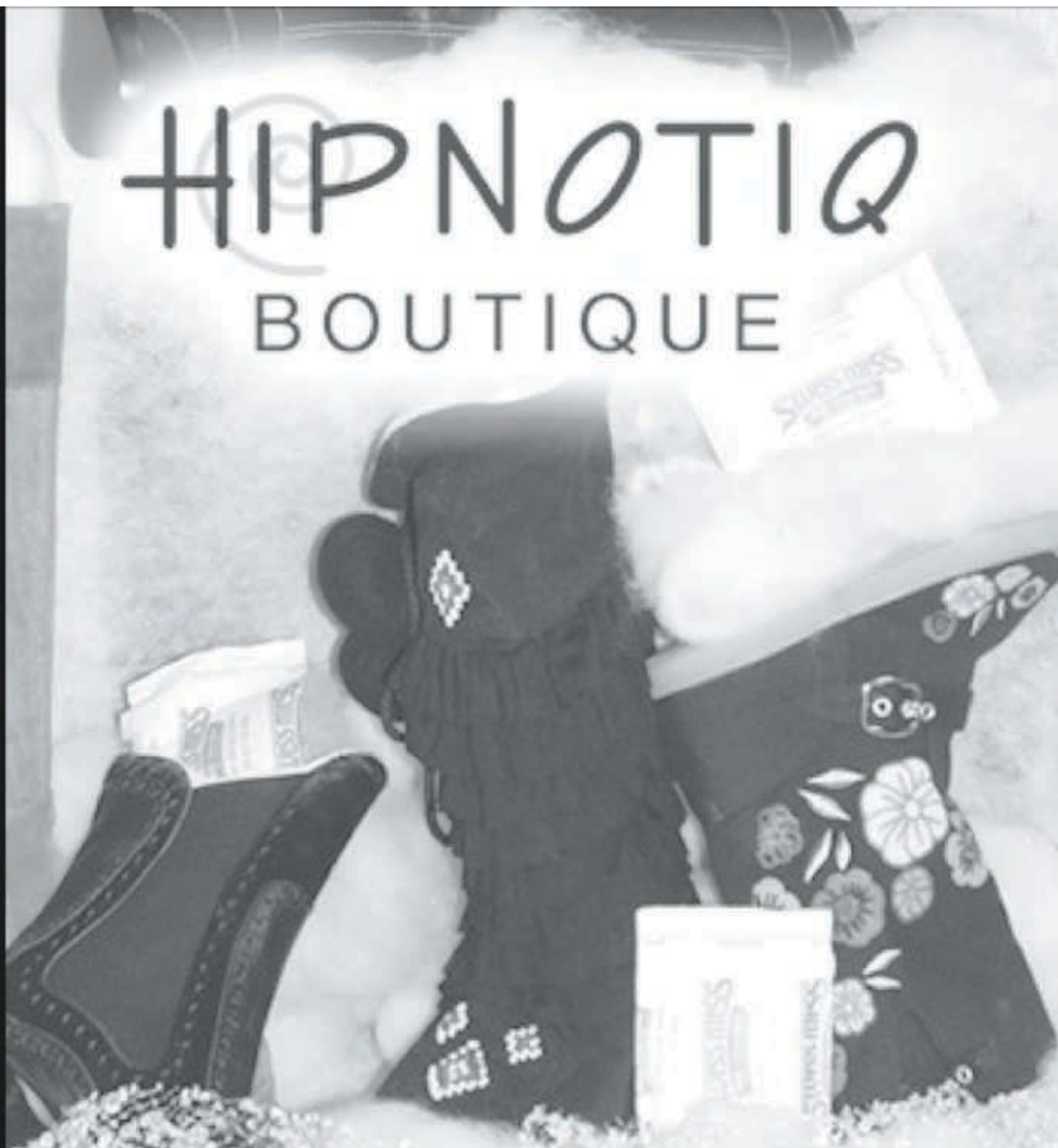


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